

BOSTON SCHOOL BUDGET: A Tight Squeeze This Year

Compared to the dramatic deficits, major layoffs, annual panics and general financial chaos of the past, the Boston public school budget story seems tame these days. While noting basic improvements, it is also important to point out that some real problems remain:

1. There's not enough

This year, because of an unexpected 1300 student increase in enrollment and pressures to keep the budget as low as possible, it now seems likely that the BPS will need more money before the school year is out. (see p. 3)

In addition, our interviews with principals (see p. 6) and program staff (see p. 4-5) revealed:

- * continuing shortages of elementary specialists (music, art and physical education)
- * too few secondary teachers to accomplish all the needed tasks to offer remedial and elective courses as well as meeting increased curriculum requirements
- * continuing shortages of materials -- sparse funds to schools cannot replace deficits in materials and keep up with increased curriculum demands
- * continuing building deterioration from lack of repairs: a developing crisis

2. The process adds to the problems

- * This year's budget is balanced on paper, but only by juggling accounts to deal with the developing deficit.
- * Underlying problems continue:
 - budget decisions not made according to educational priorities (see p. 7 for a look at the BPS budget process)
 - red tape and delays in central purchasing and repair procedures;
 - overcentralization of some details that could be handled more efficiently on a building level (for discussion of the last two points, see principals' comments, p. 6)

On the basis of our study of the budget and interviews with principals and program staff, we urge the Boston School Department to:

* Immediately make a clear case about the need for additional funds, and seek the extra funds that will probably be needed to enable the schools to complete the year without disruption

* In the new budget process, now being designed, emphasize educational priorities, find ways to eliminate current problems between the central office and individual schools, and seek ways to add needed materials and staff.

See p. 2 for a more detailed list of recommendations.

BPS: Per Pupil Costs 1985-86

\$270.2M

Type of student	Regular Ed.	Bilingual	Special Ed. .1,.2,.3**	.4**	.5,.6**
Cost of:					
Regular Education	\$1,808.50	\$ 516.71	\$1,256.28	\$ 516.71	Average tuition & admin:
Bilingual or Special Education	-----	1,723.99	1,532.33	5,152.90	\$16,514.37
Transportation	236.11	236.11	236.11	1,354.53	1,322.48
Shared Costs*	1,933.00	1,933.00	1,933.00	1,933.00	343.49
Total per pupil	\$3,977.61	\$4,409.81	\$4,957.72	\$8,957.14	\$18,180.34
Number in BPS	38,729	7,433	6,592	3,657	983

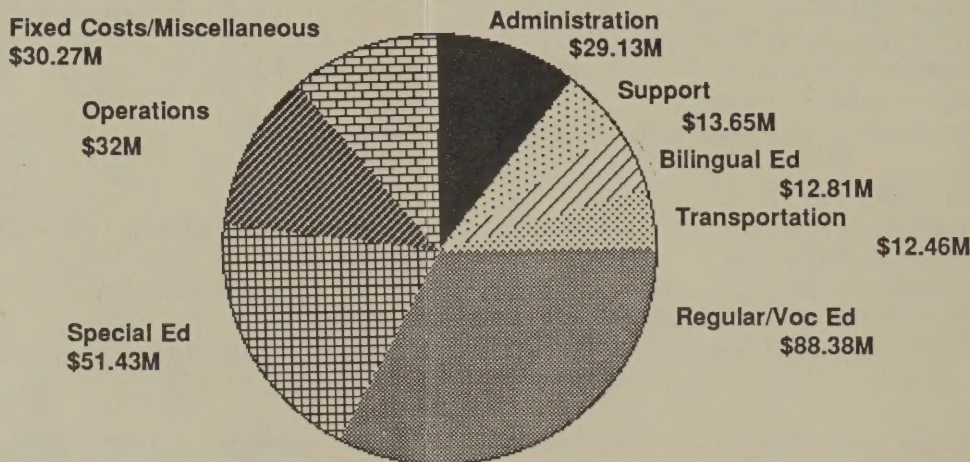
* administration, physical plant, support staff, fixed costs, etc.

** Special Education numbers refer to degree of student's disability: .1,.2 and .3 are in regular classrooms part day and resource rooms some; .4 in "substantially separate" classroom, mainstreamed for some activities; .5 and .6 in residential or day school outside BPS.

The BPS Budget: Where It All Goes

Regular Education	\$ 84,052,996	School Administration	19,383,053
teachers, supplies, subs		principals, asst.'s, clerical	
Special Education	51,432,420	Vocational Education	4,327,587
teachers, aides, Evaluation Team		teachers, administration	
Leaders, transportation, tuition		Support Services	13,646,415
Bilingual Education	12,814,397	libraries, guidance, coaches, etc.	
teachers, aides, supplies		Fixed Costs	20,302,841
Operation of Plant	32,005,977	insurance, pensions, unempl. comp.	
heat, repairs, custodians		Miscellaneous	9,966,150
Transportation	12,455,984		
(not including SPED .4,.5,.6)		Total Cost	\$270,135,713
Central Administration	9,038,815	Held in reserve	96,945
District Administration	709,077	GRAND TOTAL	\$270,232,658

FY86 Expenditure By Category (in millions)



To Build a Better Budget: CWEC Recommendations

Immediately: Begin to seek an additional appropriation based on this year's increased costs, so the schools can finish the year without disruption.

In redesigning the budget process:

Make educational priorities the starting point and focus of budget planning

Include building administrators suggestions for improving the budget process.

Decentralize some decision-making. Some ideas:

Allow a larger percentage of a school's discretionary (620) account to be spent as petty cash, without going through central purchasing

Create a similar discretionary fund that principals can spend on their own for minor building repairs (window repairs, locks, etc.)

Give principals authority to hire, fire and supervise the custodians in their buildings.

In all these areas, require principals to report on their expenditures and other actions to both the central office and the School Site Council.

Improve mechanisms for allocating and delivering resources to schools:

Improve the accuracy of the projected enrollments used as the basis for allocating staff and supply money. Adjust allocations when enrollment is different from what is projected.

Find and eliminate causes for delay in the delivery of materials ordered, so that schools receive books and supplies before they open in the fall.

Investigate reasons why the percentage of special needs students classified as .4 is increasing: Does this represent a real change in the population or School Department policies and practices? Is it valid?

Seek funds to:

increase purchases of textbooks, supplementary materials and library books (while improving retrieval of lost books).

provide music, art and physical education teachers and science curriculum support specialists, with appropriate materials, to every elementary classroom

provide secondary schools with enough staff to offer remediation and electives as well as fulfilling basic curriculum requirements

Questions and Answers on This Year's School Budget

Will the BPS be able to live within this year's budget?

There is a good chance it will not, for several reasons:

1. At the insistence of City Hall, the School Department agreed to cut about \$1.3 million from the planned budget, just as this school year was beginning, without detailed plans about where all the cuts would be made.

2. Unexpectedly large increases in enrollment (by at least 1300 students) have forced the BPS to create 58 new teaching positions since school started in September. Because of this increase, Boston will eventually receive \$1.4 million more in state aid, but not until 1987-88.

3. Other unanticipated cost increases include: repairs and transportation needed because of the Holland School fire, higher transportation costs in general, and increased health and unemployment insurance costs.

4. This year's budget is figured very tightly, without the fudge factors used in recent years: overestimates in some accounts to create a reserve fund for mid-year emergencies. This year there seems to be nothing extra.

What cost-cutting measures did the BPS take in this year's budget?

1. Cutting administrative positions at the central office, and closing some schools and district offices.

2. Slowing purchasing of computers and other materials, including a cut in discretionary funds used by schools for textbooks.

3. Cancelling some planned program expansions, including an extension of a successful middle school remedial reading program to the eighth grade and a pilot guidance program for ten elementary schools.

What does the BPS get from Chapter 188, the new Massachusetts education law?

1. Equal Opportunity Grant: given to all school systems in the state according to a formula based on "weighted" per pupil expenditure (adjusted to take the extra costs for bilingual and special education students into account). Boston public schools get \$2,214,858 this school year, already built into the regular budget.

2. \$10 per student given directly to each school, to be spent by a School Site Council representing parents, teachers and administration. This year the money will go to grades K-6, next year to the whole system.

3. Professional Development grant: awarded on a per-pupil basis to increase salaries and other forms of compensation. The BPS gets \$2,594,754 in fiscal '86; the School Department must negotiate with the Teachers' Union on how the money is used.

4. Chapter 188 also sets up two small discretionary grant funds; school systems must apply to get some of this money, targeted for early childhood education and dropout prevention.

Why does the Boston public school system spend so much?

This year's BPS budget document lists a number of reasons:

1. Teachers' salaries are high because the BPS must compete for teachers with nearby affluent suburbs.

2. Special education students are a larger percentage of the total in Boston than in many other communities. In addition, the Special Education population is shifting toward those classified as having a greater degree of disability, therefore requiring more expensive education.

3. Bilingual education is also a larger expense for Boston than many other cities.

4. Desegregation costs, including transportation and the Department of Implementation.

5. Large number of schools for the number of students, resulting in the greater per-pupil administrative and other overhead costs (see chart p. 6)

5. Non-salary expenditures have risen sharply: this includes heat/utilities and benefits (insurance premiums, pensions, etc.). In the last fourteen years this category has gone from 15% to 30% of the BPS budget.

What future trends will affect BPS spending levels?

1. Smaller secondary school enrollments will increase cost per student because the teaching force cannot be reduced in proportion to the drop in enrollment: each school must have enough teachers to meet program requirements.

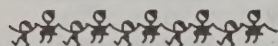
2. Increasing elementary school enrollments will force the BPS to continue to add teachers.

3. Deferred maintenance is allowing many school buildings to deteriorate. This will mean higher costs: for fuel, in inefficient buildings, and for more expensive major repairs later on.

What Does the Boston School Budget Buy?

The education of 57,394* students:

6,905 kindergarten
20,891 elementary
12,189 middle school
16,426 high school



The salaries of 3,940 teachers:

2,667.5 regular education
752 special education
417.5 bilingual education
103 vocational education

Maintenance of 124 schools:

76 elementary
23 middle schools
18 high schools
7 alternative or special needs



Transportation

\$12,455,984

racial balance: \$8,726,600
other: 3,729,384



Program By Program: Mostly Holding On, Few Gains

Middle School Reorganization

Last year middle schools added Directors of Instruction (in most middle schools) and Instructional Support Teachers (in all middle schools), to provide supervision, assistance and curriculum support to classroom teachers. The program continues this year at the same level.

Middle School Reading

Through the Targeted Reading Program, sixth and seventh graders reading more than two years below grade level are guaranteed a reading class with fifteen or fewer students.

According to the original plan, the program was to be phased in over three years, with eighth grade added this year. This year's budget, however, did not include funds for continuing the program into the eighth grade.

Computer Education

This year, goals for the three year computer purchase plan have been met. Although the regular budget has reduced funds for equipment and computer education for teachers, inservice programs are continuing, provided by state 636 grants, universities and School Volunteers.

Specifically:

Equipment:

High Schools: each has enough computers for each student to meet the 2.5 credit computer education graduation requirement.

Middle Schools: each has at least one computer lab (with 15 computers).

Elementary Schools: each has some computers. Most have 15, only a few have fewer than ten.

Staff:

Almost every high school and middle school has a computer teacher. The regular budget funds none in elementary schools, but some elementary schools have computer teachers through Chapter 636 or university pairings.

Physical Education

Staffing is the same as it was in practice last year; two newly-budgetted positions (health coordinator and athletic trainer) were never filled last year and eliminated from this year's budget.

High schools and middle schools have enough staff to meet state requirements : (two gym periods a week grades 1-10, at least one in grades 11 and 12), although not all students are currently assigned to this many classes, due to scheduling problems.

Only a few elementary schools have physical education teachers; one district has a rotating teacher. Most elementary schools are served only by five physical education specialists assigned to work with classroom teachers.

BPS funds provide extracurricular sports programs in all high schools, and match John Hancock Co. grants to provide after-school sports in most middle schools. Equipment budgets for sports teams are too low to provide adequate equipment, according to the Physical Education Department.

Music

Music teaching positions added last year were kept in this year's budget. Currently:

Elementary schools: almost all have music teachers part of the week, although only two have full time music teachers. Most have a chorus and over half have instrumental instruction, some added this year.

Middle schools: about half have music teachers full time; the other half, part time

High schools: only six (1/3) have music teachers full time; nine more part time

Budget cuts, however, eliminated the music field supervisor position and reduced funds for buying musical instruments.

Jobs Collaborative

Last year's gains continue: every non-exam high school has a "Career Experience Teacher" to provide career instruction and counseling and job placement, funded by the BPS and the Private Industry Council.

School Assistance

This new office, created in Supt. Wilson's administrative reorganization this fall, combines a number of formerly separate offices: the Senior Advisors for elementary, middle and high schools, the Institute for Professional Development, and the Boston Compact. It is also responsible for assisting school-level planning, replacing the School Based Management and School Improvement Program offices.

The School Assistance department will help schools develop the School Site Councils mandated by the new Massachusetts education law, and provide technical assistance in planning and staff development.

This department faces expanded responsibilities with a reduced staff: positions were eliminated when the two former offices for school-based planning were closed. This year's budget originally called for some new staff to help build school councils, but these positions were eliminated before they were filled

Foreign Languages

Middle Schools: Three added foreign language programs this year, by cutting in other areas; however, eight middle schools still lack any foreign language program, although the promotional policy requires them to offer one. Even in those schools with foreign language teachers, there are not always enough to serve every student.

High Schools: Foreign language program unchanged

Elementary: No BPS-funded foreign language teaching except in Advanced Work Classes. Some language teaching funded by Chapter 636.

Guidance

No change: 92 guidance counselors, providing a ratio of 1:341 in high school, 1:399 in middle school and 1:285 for bilingual students at both levels. Only one elementary school has a guidance counselor; a pilot program to provide counselors in another ten elementary schools was passed by the School Committee but not funded.

Art

Middle and elementary art teachers added last year were kept, and two art teachers added in high schools. Staffing in high schools is adequate, according to the art department. Each middle school has an art teacher at least half time and some full time.

However, the BPS still has only 17 elementary art teachers shared among 77 schools

Building Repairs

This year's budget continues the \$6 million allocation required under the state Tregor law, widely regarded as inadequate to prevent continuing deterioration of school buildings. Therefore the

State Board of Education recommended that an increase of the annual repair allocation to \$8 be a condition of implementing the BPS long term facilities repair plan required by Judge Garrity. Garrity has ordered a study of the state's proposal to increase the maintenance budget, with parties to abide by the results.

Capital Improvement Plan: as proposed jointly by the city, state and School Committee to Judge Garrity, the plan calls for approximately \$70 million in repairs over the next ten years, to be paid for by the city with a bond issue, 90% of which will later be reimbursed by the state (not part of the regular BPS budget). Includes:

- * \$35 million for Latin School and Latin Academy
- * \$3 million for White Stadium
- * \$1.7 million for a central kitchen
- * \$30 million for other capital improvements, mostly boilers, roofs and energy conservation. Even after the repairs are finished, most schools will not look much different.

Judge Garrity has approved this plan, except for the Latin Schools portion, because there were no details on this provided. He also changed the plan to require a complete overhaul of South Boston High School in the second year. All the rest of the money for the second year will go for boilers and roofs at Burke High School and the Tobin School.

Library

Staff: same as last year. Elementary schools all have library aides; the number of days a week depends on projected enrment. Some middle schools have professional librarians; some have aides, not all of whom are in the school full time. All high schools have professional librarians but none have aides.

Materials: A cut in funding has slowed plans to stock each library with social studies books to support the curriculum in high schools (middle and elementary schools have these, and books for language arts have been supplied at all levels). Overall, the elimination of federal funds for library purchases has left collections inadequately kept up, according to the Library Department.

Elementary Science

Five science specialists continue to work with classroom teachers and supply materials in the same twenty elementary schools as last year, but hoped-for expansion to other schools was not funded.

Bus Monitors

Restored last year to approximately half the bus runs, bus monitor coverage remains about the same, with 142 monitors on about 45% of bus runs.

Complete this sentence:

What Principals Want Most is More.....

If you answered **staff** or **textbook money** or **maintenance work**, you're half right.

The twelve principals (four at each level) we consulted about this year's BPS budget said they still lack important resources in all these areas. But an equally strong plea was for more **authority** over how all these resources are used. Specifically, principals said they need:

Staff

In secondary schools principals and headmasters said they need more **teachers** to meet increased curriculum requirements and still have enough staff to offer courses the school selects to meet the needs of its own students: from remedial courses to advanced science to electives to alternative programs for over-age students.

Several also said they need more **guidance counselors**, arguing that at 400 to 1 the counselors are spread too thin to provide real counseling.

In elementary schools principals said their biggest staff need was for **specialists** to teach art music and physical education.

On all levels some principals also said they needed more authority over **custodians**, with custodians accountable to them and not the central office.

In general among the principals we interviewed was a strong desire to be able to hire their own staff, including teachers, custodians and any others who work in the building. A typical comment: "I'm responsible for this school. Give me the authority to hire, fire and produce results."

Building needs

Some schools need major repairs; in others the main need was for better routine maintenance:

paint

more autonomy (to be able to select priorities, arrange for repairs directly, and supervise quality)

Several principals gave examples of problems caused by current procedures, which they see as over-centralized and cumbersome: long delays in fixing broken windows, costing the BPS hundreds in fuel; a central decision to spend thousands on new computer equipment, while there was no money for locks and grates to protect equipment already installed; a computer part available locally for \$7, purchased centrally for \$110.

Supplies

Principals said they need more money for **textbooks and supplies**: because book prices have increased faster than School Department allotments, and because lack of books is holding them back from

implementing the citywide curriculum and developing curriculum in their schools.

Some also said they needed fewer restrictions on their use of supply money, or authority to spend money directly without going through central purchasing procedures.

Fewer Logjams

In two areas principals said administrative procedures worsen their resource problems:

Delays in the delivery of supplies: When we called, around November 1, some had not yet received materials ordered last spring.

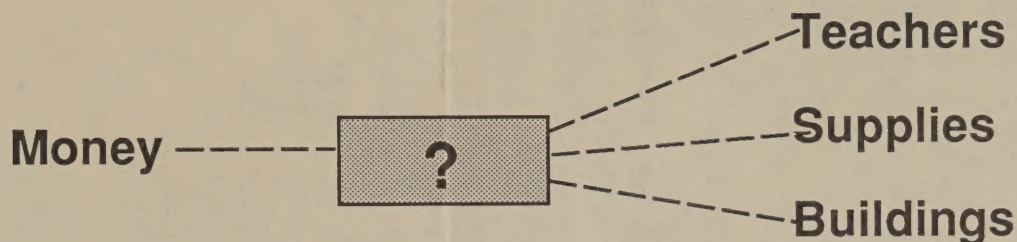
Low enrollment projections: Supply money and staff are allocated on the basis of enrollment projected for the school the previous January. If more students show up in the fall, adjustments in staffing may be slow, and no adjustments are made in the supply budget.

School Size: Bigger is Usually Cheaper

One reason Boston's public school system costs so much to run is that many of its middle and high schools enroll a small number of students. This increases cost per student, since all schools must have administrators, clerical workers, guidance counselors and teachers for required courses. In a larger school, these basic costs are shared among more students, lowering the average cost. The table below is based on this year's budget:

School	Enrollment	Administrative Cost*	
		Total	Per Student
Middle Schools			
A	190	\$ 196,800	\$1,040
B	310	258,600	840
C	520	286,100	550
D	540	296,800	550
E	900	465,600	520
High Schools			
A	760	\$ 889,400	\$1,180
B	1,000	828,100	830
C	1,400	1,374,200	960

* **Includes** all salaries for non-teaching staff: administrators, counselors, clericals, coaches, custodians, etc.



What Happens In Between?

A Look At The Boston Public School Budget Process

Money Comes In From:

Boston property taxes, but school costs are partially offset by

state and federal aid: last year the BPS received \$123 million in state aid and \$2.5 million in federal aid. This aid does not pay for specific school programs. It goes into general city revenues, from which money is allocated for the BPS. State and federal aid formulas are based on population, not the actual costs of a particular program. For example, the state reimburses the city a certain amount for each special education student. But the amount of this reimbursement has no relation to the amount Boston actually spends on special education.

A "base allocation" is set for the Boston Public Schools, according to the "Tregor Law". This cannot be reduced, but may be increased by the Mayor and City Council. For several years the base allocation has remained at \$224.5 million. As BPS costs have increased, the City Council has each year appropriated "supplemental" money. The Boston public school spending level is the total of the base allocation, the supplemental money and anticipated aid and surpluses. The spending level this year is \$270.2 million.

School Department Budget Decisions Are Made By:

The School Committee, relying on a

basic proposal from the

Superintendent. Superintendent Wilson has said he will make changes in the budget process, but in the past the proposal has been drawn up by the Deputy Superintendent of Finance and Administration and the Budget Office, with input solicited from administrators and program heads. The process of budget-making includes:

School Staffing Formula, based on projected enrollment at each school, adjusted for the number of special needs and bilingual students, and students achieving substantially below grade level. Personnel costs are 75% to 85% of the total budget.

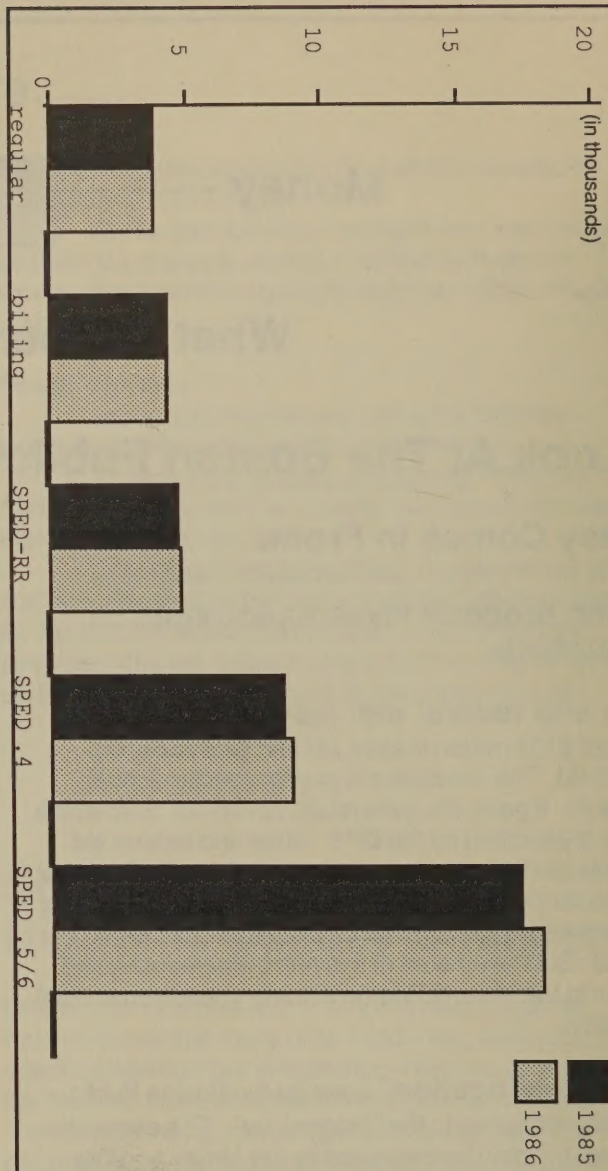
Choices among programs (additions, cuts) have been made sometimes by the School Committee, but more often by the Deputy Superintendent, sometimes with lobbying by parents or program heads. Decisions have not been based on evaluations of existing programs, because until this year the BPS had no evaluation unit. (Now a Director of Research and Evaluation has been added.) In the past, programs have often been added or cut with little educational planning. Some are continued with no investigation of their effectiveness, and positions already filled are given priority, while new programs may not be adopted because there is no money.

An example from this year's budget process: according to a three year plan adopted by the School Committee, a middle school Targeted Reading program for students reading below grade level was due to expand to include eighth grade this year. Staff collected material documenting the success of this program in the sixth and seventh grades, and explaining educational reasons why eighth grade should be included. The committee preparing the budget never looked at the materials or found time to hear the staff make a case for the program.

Once the budget proposal is prepared it goes to

The School Committee. The Committee makes some specific changes, or makes decisions that force changes. Last year, for instance, the School Committee made a policy that no teachers would be laid off. That meant keeping on salary forty teachers whose certifications were no longer needed because of program and enrollment shifts. The School Committee sometimes restores administrative or other positions that the Budget Office has proposed to cut. Last year, for example, the Budget Office proposed reducing the number of Pupil Adjustment Counselors, but the School Committee restored these positions.

INSIDE: Report on Boston Public School Budget



1985
1986

Per Pupil Cost: What Do the Numbers Mean?

Dividing this year's budget (\$270.2 million) by enrollment, (57,394), you get \$4,708 per pupil. But if you break this down by type of student, you get a clearer picture:

Number of Students	Cost per student
38,729 regular education	\$ 3,977.61
7,433 bilingual education	4,409.81
6,592 special education .1,.2,.3	4,957.72
3,657 special education .4	8,957.14
983 special education .5,.6*	18,180.34

*day or residential students outside BPS
more on per pupil cost inside

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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CWEC's Annual Analysis

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VIEW FROM THE SCHOOLS

The people who know the most about Boston's public schools are the people who are also most crucial to their improvement: principals, teachers, students and parents whose lives are involved with a particular school, day in and day out. To learn more about how these key groups see their schools, the Citywide Educational Coalition is conducting a year-long project, VIEW FROM THE SCHOOLS. In previous reports we presented results of interviews with principals and teachers in thirty-three schools. This newsletter reports on interviews with students in those same schools. For our next issue we are interviewing parents of students in these schools.

STUDENTS: Their Year-End Report on Their Schools

Students we interviewed agreed with their principals and teachers that schools are **improving** in several areas: race relations among students, discipline, and the addition of special academic programs.

On the whole, however, the students described **serious problems** in middle and high schools. They also made clear that schools on all levels are providing some **positive academic and personal experiences** for at least some of their students. A few central points emerged from the interviews:

* **Teachers:** The most valued teacher qualities were: active help to student learning, a positive attitude toward students, and personal involvement with students.

* **Discipline:** Students in most middle and high schools reported widespread discipline problems, especially cheating, classroom disruption and vandalism. Fighting was also common in many middle schools. Only a little more than half the secondary students agreed with the statement "This school is mostly peaceful and under control."

* **Building conditions:** Many students said the dirt and disrepair of the building is one of the worst things about school and that cleaning, painting and fixing up are high priorities.

* **Student motivation:** Most middle and high school students reported serious motivation problems. They felt many of their peers are not interested in doing well in school, or even in graduating from high school. Others, however, are clearly serious about their schoolwork and believe education is important.

(For a fuller report on student answers to questions about these and other subjects, see p. 3 - 6.

For information about the students we interviewed and how they were chosen, see p. 6)

Student Views: What Can They Teach Their Schools?

Student responses suggest some important priorities for their schools:

1. Foster teaching methods that provide active support to student learning.
2. Focus on discipline at the classroom level, so classroom time can be used for learning.
3. Improve building conditions, including painting, cleaning and repairs.
4. Develop strategies for increasing student motivation.
5. Foster positive, cooperative interaction among students.

These recommendations grew out of some major themes in the students' discussion of their schools, and bear directly on several areas of school policy:

Staff Development

Students' views give strong support to the opinion, expressed by both teachers and administrators, that professional interaction and inservice training should be high priorities. In particular they indicate a need for staff development in **discipline techniques** and in **teaching methods that provide active support for student learning**.

It is common for adults to remark that students today are hard to teach because they expect to be entertained. We found very little of that sentiment among students we interviewed. Only two complained about boring classes. When they listed the qualities of favorite teachers, only a few said "interesting."

These students seemed to accept rather passively --- naively --- the assumption that they were supposed to learn the material being taught. In addition to a desire for teachers to be friendly and positive toward them, they were asking mainly for help in meeting the demands made upon them: another explanation if they didn't get it the first time, help with particular problems. Many students said their favorite

BPS STUDENTS: SOME BASIC FACTS AND FIGURES

ENROLLMENT, 1984-85

Total	Black	White	Asian	Hispanic	American Indian
56,996	48%	27%	8%	17%	<1%
	Bilingual	Special Ed (mainstream)		Special Ed (Separate)	
	14%	12%		6%	

DISCIPLINE

According to John Chistolini, Chief Security Officer for the Boston Public Schools, there has been a significant decrease in serious incidents in the last several years, with a more effective school security force.

In the school year 1981-82, in all Boston Public Schools, there were:

331 robberies, 54 assaults with a dangerous weapon, 99 assaults on staff

Since then these crimes have decreased by approximately:

65% (robberies), 17% (assault with dangerous weapon), 39% (assaults on staff)

Suspensions:

(for violation of school rules or BPS Code of Discipline; separation from school for a certain number of days; given at the discretion of the principal)

Year: 1981-82: 5,483

black white other
70% 21% 9%

1982-83: 7,012

black white other
69% 19% 12%

1983-84: 5,707

black white other
67% 20% 13%

Expulsions:

(For extremely serious offenses, such as possession of handgun, distribution of illegal drugs, or seriously harming another person; separation from school for one year; given by Deputy Superintendent for School Operations, after principal recommendation, District Superintendent review, and two formal hearings.)

For many years, no BPS students were expelled from school. The first recent expulsions were in **1981-82**, when **6** students were expelled. In **1983-84**, **10** students were expelled.

BPS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

No research has been done on what graduates do after high school, except questions asked of seniors before they leave school in May. Since their answers are not checked and no follow-up is done, they are at best only a rough indication of what graduates actually do. These are the results of the survey of the 1984 graduating class:

Total number graduating: 3,027

4 year college: 36%

Junior college: 13%

Occupational training: 8%

Full time employment: 11%

Military service: 6%

Unemployed: 2%

Undecided/no response 24%

ANNUAL DROPOUT RATE

FOR BPS HIGH SCHOOLS:

NOTE: This figure represents the percentage of BPS high school students who drop out of school **each year**.

The percentage of students who drop out at some time during their entire four year high school period is, of course, larger, approaching 50%. It is not known how many of these students later enter private or parochial schools.

1981-82 1982-83 1983-84

10.7% 12.1% 14.2%

Only in the exam schools, Umana and Copley Square High is the **annual** dropout rate 5% or less.

In all others it is much higher, and in four high schools (Dorchester, South Boston, and Jamaica Plain) the **annual** drop out rate is 24% or over

ACHIEVEMENT

BPS students are tested every spring with the Metropolitan Achievement Tests in reading and math. The test compares their performance with that of other students across the United States. A score of 50, for example, means the student has done as well as 50% of students in that grade; a score of 75 means the student has done better than 75% of other students:

Grade	Math			Reading		
	1983	1984	1985	1983	1984	1985
1	52	70	70	52	68	68
2	50	68	68	50	58	60
3	52	66	68	48	56	52
4	44	62	66	40	48	50
5	52	64	70	46	50	52
6	44	54	62	44	48	50
7	42	52	56	42	48	48
8	42	54	58	48	54	54
9	30	42	50	38	46	48
10	36	40	44	36	40	46
11	38	46	46	40	44	40

ATTENDANCE

Attendance has been improving for several years; the new promotional policy sets **85%** as the minimum attendance for passing in any marking period.

Average monthly attendance, Oct.-Feb

	82-83	83-84	84-85
high	82.8%	80.8%	84%
middle	82.7%	83.5%	87.9%
elem.	89.4%	89.3%	91.7%

Student Viewpoint: School Improvements

Race relations was the area in which students most clearly pointed to improvement: almost all high school students and a majority of middle school students said racial conflict is definitely not a problem in their schools. About 80% at both levels said most students have friends of other races.

A small number of students did say they were bothered by "racial dislike," "choosing friends by race," or "making fun of other races." Others, however, said the absence of racial conflict was one best thing about their school.

New school programs were praised by those involved: a middle school alternative program; a high school career magnet program; ROTC. Participants emphasized these programs' spirit of purpose and teacher-student involvement. They often gave program faculty as examples of favorite teachers.

Some students also said they appreciated the job or educational opportunities available through the school.

Better student behavior, especially less fighting, was mentioned by students in three high schools. They analyzed some reasons for the improvement:

"The school is much better now. Before, there were always fights in the halls and the bathrooms. But as the building was fixed up, the kids' attitudes improved."

"Discipline is much better in the last few years --- even this year compared to last. They're much stricter; there are more teachers in the hall. If kids come in drunk, they're sent right home."

Praise for teachers, administrators and schools:

Without comparisons to the past, which are difficult for students to make, many students expressed very positive feelings. When asked to name the three best things about their school, a large majority of the students named "some teachers;" many others said "courses" or a particular course or academic program. Many named the principal or other administrators.

Teachers: What Makes a Favorite?

When we asked secondary students to describe their favorite teachers, there was an overwhelming consensus; three main qualities were most valued:

1. Active efforts to help students learn: Students said their favorite teachers explained carefully, made the subject understandable, cared about students learning, made extra efforts to help them when they had trouble with school work and "made you work hard."

"They go over everything with you if you need them to, without making you feel stupid."

"She really pushed me --- I wish my other teachers had pushed me."

"Some teachers put in extra time after school to give kids extra help."

[teachers in a special program] "they'll sit with you and keep working with you. Every teacher puts an effort into it."

2. Positive attitude toward their classes: Most often the description was "nice to students," but students also said their favorite teachers

"Treated students with respect"

"Made me feel good about myself"

"Didn't make negative remarks about students"

"Didn't yell."

3. Understanding, "like a friend":

"You could really talk to her and she'd listen and help if you had a problem at home or at school."

"Cared about us."

"Knows how to communicate with kids."

"He plays basketball with us after school."

A substantial number of students listed "some teachers" as one of the worst things about the school. In

describing teachers they disliked, the same issues were important:

"They don't care whether the students learn, they just teach."

"Hard to understand and won't answer questions."

"Don't consider themselves teachers, just recorders of marks"

"They yell."

"They put students down."

"There's one teacher who hits kids."

"Some teachers embarrass the students and treat them like babies. They give humiliating punishments, like making you write out the whole chapter standing up."

"A lot of teachers come down too hard on the students. They seem afraid the students will take advantage of them if they talk on their level or be friendly, so they come down hard on them for every little thing."

*** Other comments about teachers:** Some students also said their favorite teachers made the class interesting, maintained a comfortable classroom atmosphere, and showed competence (knew their subject, disciplined the class well, etc). A very small number of complaints were about boring classes. **Interest was a minor theme compared to help in learning and positive relationships with the students.**

How Are They Seen?

Elementary

Elementary students rated their teachers very highly. It is possible that in some cases they gave the answers they thought they were supposed to give, but we also spoke with many elementary school children who were obviously genuinely enthusiastic about their schools and teachers.

Teachers: How Are They Seen?

Middle and High School:

We listed some statements about teachers and asked students whether each statement was true of "most," "some," or "only a few" of their teachers.

About 75% gave their teachers high marks for academic competence, agreeing that **most**:

***Know their subject**

***Think their subject is important**

***Expect students to work and learn.**

About 55% said **most** of their teachers

***Keep order in class**

***Respect students**

***Encourage students to think for themselves**

About 40% said that **most** teachers

***Treat students fairly**

School Climate: Is the School Fair and Friendly?

The secondary school students we interviewed had many complaints about their status in their schools, but most also seemed to find at least some school authorities fair and approachable.

Respect: Almost all said their principal or headmaster respects the students, although some complained about negative or disrespectful attitudes toward students in the school as a whole.

Responsiveness: Many students said there was someone in the school they could go to if they had a problem with a teacher: most often they mentioned a guidance counselor, but sometimes the principal, assistant principal or another teacher. A small number of students said one of the best things about their schools was concern for the students:

"They care about you."

"They help kids who are having trouble in school."

"They try to straighten you out if you're getting into trouble."

One student gave an example of the school's response to student complaints:

"Seven of us wrote a letter to the principal about a teacher who smoked and swore in class, and the principal stopped it."

Several students, however, complained that raising problems did no good, including one middle school student who felt the school administration had ignored her reports of sexual abuse by a fellow student.

Other comments:

"A group of us went to see the principal about a teacher who hits kids. She said she would do something about it, but she didn't."

"If you go to the housemaster with a problem about a teacher, they will just say: no matter what, the teacher always wins."

In describing changes they would like to see, a few students talked about the need for more communication and more student input in school policies:

The Elementary Curriculum: How Students See It

Most elementary students seemed to have the essentials of a complete program. In addition to reading and math, **almost all** said they have regular **library periods, music classes, and science**. About 80% said they have **art**. About 70% said they have **computer classes** and 70% have **physical education**.

About 10% of the elementary students said they have **social studies rarely** or never, and 10% said they are never asked to **write** original material at least a paragraph long.

When children told us their favorite and least favorite subjects, **social studies** won hands down as the **most disliked subject**, with 40% of the students mentioning it.

The big winners for **favorite subjects**, in order, were **computer** and **math**, with about 33% of the students mentioning each. (We couldn't resist checking, and discovered that more girls than boys picked math as a favorite). **Gym** and **reading** were next, with about 20% of the students picking each, with **science, art and music** in a close race for third.

(We could not do a similar survey of secondary curriculum because of the variety of courses secondary students take).

"Establish more openness by holding meetings...put up a student suggestion box."

"Let the students set up a meeting on anything they dislike."

Fairness: Almost all the students agreed with the general statement "School-wide discipline is fair."

A substantial minority, however, listed **unfair discipline or restrictions** as a problem in the school:

"Teachers are always on my case. I get blamed for things I didn't do."

"You can get suspended for the least little thing."

Race and fairness: Of the students who said teachers or administration were unfair, **very few** mentioned race as a factor. Some interviewers felt students were reluctant to talk to us about this issue. However, there were a few complaints or suggestions of racial discrimination: one high school student felt discipline was "color differentiated," with blacks punished more severely than whites for the same offense. A black middle school honors student complained she could never get to see a guidance counselor, while a white student we interviewed in the same school was receiving much guidance office help in applying for exam schools.

There were also some racial patterns in students' answers to questions about the school. In general, black female --- but not black male --- students were more likely than others to say that school-wide discipline was unfair, and that only "some" teachers keep order in class, expect students to learn, respect students and treat students fairly. Hispanic female -- but not male -- students also tended to be more critical, but not as consistently.

The fact that some students are more critical does not necessarily imply they are treated less well. Some of the most thoughtful criticisms came from obviously successful students of all races. Still, this difference in students' views may reflect differences in their experiences.

Discipline: How Much Trouble?

In **elementary schools**, about **70%** of the students agreed that their fellow students "**behave right most of the time**," (often with a grin and an emphasis on "most of the time.")

In **middle and high schools**, many students reported high levels of discipline problems. A substantial number said the antisocial behavior of their fellow students was one of the worst things about their schools, citing the problem in general ("troublemakers"), or mentioning a particular violation (such as fighting or vandalism).

We listed discipline problems and asked students whether each was common at their schools. Their answers: **Most common discipline problems in middle schools** (with percent of students reporting each);

- Vandalism** (75%)
- Cheating** (66%)
- Classroom disruption** (66%)
- Fighting** (58%)
- Stealing** (56%)

In **high schools**:

- Cheating** (76%)
- Classroom disruption** (66%)
- Vandalism** 54%
- Drug use** (37%)
- Stealing** (35%)
- Drinking** (31%)

About **57%** of the secondary school students agreed to the statement "**This school is mostly peaceful and**

under control." A small number said effective discipline or "not much trouble" was one of the best things about their schools.

The discipline problems most students saw as common were not criminal activities but misbehavior, with some exceptions. Only a very few middle school students expressed any fear about being in school. Even for many of the students who reported widespread discipline problems, these did not seem to dominate their school experience: they talked mainly about teachers, courses, and friends. In general, high schools seem calmer than middle schools, and students in some high schools reported few problems.

It is not primarily the students' personal safety that is threatened by the types of discipline problems most common at most schools. Rather, it is their education, marred by cheating and classroom disruption, and the atmosphere in their schools.

When asked what they would like to change about their schools, many **middle and high school** students and some **elementary** school students said they would tighten discipline in general, or crack down on a particular kind of misbehavior. A few, bothered by discipline problems, saw improvement as hopeless:

[administrators and teachers] "**do their best, but some kids are impossible.**"

Some just said they would "**stop fighting**," while others had ideas about how to improve discipline. Several of these emphasized getting rid of "bad kids," sometimes explaining that they would find them another school, or expel them only after fair warning. One elementary school student wanted to "**give bad kids bad report cards**," one high school student would "**give bad kids more work to improve their grades.**"

Some other ideas were:

"**Make it an all girls' school**"

"**Change it into a private school, because discipline is more strict.**"

"**Hold morning devotions.**"

"**Have assemblies where the headmaster could explain to the students why school is important.**"

"**Let the kids stay in the room and have the teachers change classes.**"

"**I would teach the kids to be good.**"

Guidance: How Much Help?

Our interviews suggest that many students see guidance counselors rarely, and that the purpose of many guidance department visits is administrative rather than real counseling:

Almost 90% of the **high school** students we interviewed said they see a guidance counselor at least once a year; but **40%** of the **middle school** students said they never see a guidance counselor.

Only about **50%** the **high school** students seemed to have some regular contact with a guidance counselor, seeing a counselor at least four times a year. Only about **17%** of **middle school** students said they saw counselors more than three times a year.

Choosing courses was the most common reason for seeing a guidance counselor, then further education. About 20% of the students had seen a guidance counselor to help with career planning, and 15% about problems with grades; only a small number said they saw counselors about discipline or personal problems.

In the group we interviewed, students who planned to go to college saw counselors about twice as often as those who didn't. Asian and Hispanic students saw counselors less often than other groups. We again caution people against taking our results as proof of general patterns. They suggest, however, areas that could be investigated further.

Are School Buildings Adequate?

Many secondary students said **the condition of the building** was one of the **worst** things about the school: dirt, disrepair, the need for paint and "fixing up."

Some **secondary** school students and a substantial number of **elementary** students said their schools needed better facilities or equipment. The secondary students who said this were mostly in one crowded high school, or mentioned a very specific lack (not enough printers in the computer room). Most of the elementary students who emphasized facilities were in buildings that lacked a gym.

How Important Is School Anyway?

Peer Group: No Consensus

Students' descriptions of their fellow students' attitudes confirm teacher accounts of a widespread motivation problem. On the other hand, our interviews also showed that there are many students who take school seriously and believe other students do, too.

On the **elementary** level, about **75%** of the students we interviewed said that **most** of their classmates do their assignments and try to get good grades.

Most **secondary** students, however, seemed to see academic motivation --- completing assignments, trying to get good grades, wanting to learn --- as just one option: some kids are into that kind of thing, some aren't. About **20%** of the students we interviewed said **most** students in their schools do their school work and try to do well in school. Another **20%**, however, said that **few** students have these attitudes.

Even if students are not motivated to do well academically, they have a stake in meeting minimum school requirements in order to graduate. Our interviews, however, suggest that there is no consensus among BPS students about the importance of graduating from high school. Only **45%** of the students thought high school graduation was important to **most** of their fellow students.

On the other hand, many of the students we spoke with showed real interest and motivation to do well in school. Many said some part of the academic program was one of the **best** things about their school.

Students felt that teacher efforts could be important in motivating students. One used himself as an example: the year a teacher had really pushed him, he had learned. Since then he had been falling behind. Some other comments:

"My teachers push me to do well. I think that's what makes me do well."

"The teachers here try very hard for the students. They get after the students. Most are

not already motivated, but if a teacher gets after them, they do their work."

Another student said if she were in charge of the school she would have teachers **"use teaching techniques that get kids wanting to learn---from inside."**

Parents: Graduation Is Important

Of our 58 questions to secondary school students there was only one to which every single student gave the same answer: **"Is it important to your parents that you graduate from high school?"** From every student, the answer was **yes**. Almost all could describe exactly how their parents let them know it was important. Some typical comments:

"They talk to me about it. All the time!"

"She makes me get out of bed and come here."

"They always talk to me about college."

"They're always after me about doing my work."

"My father never finished school and desperately wants me to."

"I almost gave up and dropped out but they kept me going."

"If I dropped out I'd probably get kicked out of the house."

"She's always telling stories about how she quit school and had me when she was young and how hard it was, about how whenever you go for a job they check you out to see if you have an education."

Our sample may have missed the layer of students whose parents are least supportive. However, this group's unanimous response must indicate that, even on the middle and high school level, there are large numbers of parents who care very much about their children's education and whose concern is, in turn, important to the children:

"My parents," explained one middle school student, "keep me in line because they care for me."

What Students Were Interviewed ?

We interviewed regular education students in the same schools in which we interviewed principals and teachers earlier in the school year. The schools were randomly chosen by level and section of the city. In all we spoke with:

72 elementary; 48 middle school and 54 high school students in 16 elementary, 7 middle and 9 high schools.

The middle and high schools students were:

40% male, 60% female

44% black, 33% white, 17% Hispanic, 6% Asian

According to their own reports:

20% honors, 73% passing, 7% failing courses or the year

15% had discipline problems requiring parent visits

The elementary students were:

45% male, 55% female

45% black, 25% white, 22% Hispanic, 7% Asian

According to their own reports:

42% honors, 50% passing, 8% failing some subjects

10% had discipline problems requiring parent visits

How Were The Students Chosen?

We selected students in each school by a random sampling method, sampling each race separately in numbers that reflected their percentages in the school. In most schools, within that randomly selected group, we interviewed those students who returned signed parental permission slips. In those middle and high schools where only a small number returned permission slips, we conducted telephone interviews with students who had *not* done so, to make sure the interviews represented a wide range of students.

In spite of the care with which we selected this group of students, it is **not** a true representative sample of Boston public school students. Because of the permission slip procedure and other limitations, the group may not include the most alienated and troubled students, those most likely to drop out. On the other hand, the group does include a wide range of students with a variety of backgrounds and school experiences. We think their observations can teach

Student Views: What Can They Teach Their Schools?

(continued from p. 1)

teachers "pushed me," "made me learn;" only one said he liked a teacher because he was "easy."

The students' comments also made it clear that there are many teachers from whom they do not feel they get this kind of active help.

Discipline

Students' descriptions of widespread discipline problems make clear that, in many schools, better discipline is a crucial ingredient of better education.

In particular, their accounts suggest several areas for attention:

Cheating: Although not as obvious as fighting or vandalism, the widespread cheating students described is undermining to the academic program and especially problematic with the current strong emphasis on testing.

Classroom disruption: unless it reaches great proportions, it may not be a central concern of administrators. However, this again is a discipline problem that undermines learning, as teachers emphasized. The fact that a large majority of students said it is a widespread problem supports teachers' desires for **more discipline support from outside the classroom**, including ways of dealing with a small number of disruptive students.

Building Conditions

Student responses back up their teachers' and administrators' insistence that **cleaning, painting, and repairing** are priorities in many schools, necessary to school morale.

The other main building priority that emerged from our interviews was **gyms in elementary schools**.

Racial Equity

Although we did not ask questions about possible differences in schools' treatment of racial groups, students' responses gave some indications of such differences: a few explicit claims of discrimination, some racial differences in how students felt about their schools, and apparent differences in access to guidance counselors. These bits of evidence, emerging in spite of what we felt was a reluctance among students to discuss this issue with us, reinforce the need for continuing efforts to identify and eliminate sources of racial inequity in schools.

Parent Involvement

Teachers and administrators we interviewed were very aware of those parents who are unwilling or unable to support their children's educational efforts. The students we interviewed remind us that there are many, many parents who care very much about their children's education, and make efforts to help their children stay and succeed in school.

This parental concern provides important potential, mostly untapped, for developing school-home cooperation in helping students' education. Finding ways to build this cooperation should also be an important priority for schools.

Motivation

Students' comments reinforce their teachers' view that lack of motivation for schoolwork is a serious problem. It probably needs to be addressed on several levels: **teaching methods** that motivate, as one student suggested, are important. In addition, however, some students need to be convinced of the **value of high school graduation**.

Lack of motivation to get good grades, or even to graduate, threatens school efforts to increase learning and raise standards. To change the point made by Commissioner Lawson, you can raise the bar to six feet, but if the kid doesn't see any reason to bother jumping over it, it won't help. Increasing requirements for high school graduation will motivate only students who value high school graduation. Our interviews suggest that many students do not.

Since students are probably all too well aware of the unemployment level among minority young people, concrete programs that lead to jobs are important in addressing their doubts. On the other hand, according to our interviews, some students felt that even the desire for a good job was not shared by all high school students; at the middle school level it seemed that many students had not yet thought much about the future.

For many younger students, and for some older ones as well, the problem of motivation cannot simply be reduced to the slogan "To get a good job, get a good education."

Student Atmosphere

It is common for good elementary school teachers to consider it part of their responsibility to help students build positive, cooperative relationships with each other. When students reach secondary school, the usual assumption is that nurturing positive human relations is no longer the school's job. Their need for adult guidance in social development, however, remains strong.

A number of students said they wished their schools had more activities. A few spoke on a more general level about the need to develop more positive relationships among students:

"I would bring students together more to make them a bit closer-knit."

"I would stop the kids from being mean."

There could be many benefits if secondary schools took on the responsibility of building closer and more cooperative relationships among students. House or cluster systems, group activities, and direct adult support could all contribute to developing a better atmosphere among students.

It is also important for school staff to set a positive example, as many already do. If students feel, as some said, that there are teachers whose treatment of them is insulting, they will not be convinced that the school really holds high standards of human relations.

The benefits of a school-wide emphasis on positive atmosphere could include improvements in race relations, discipline, motivation, and general morale. Students who said their schools have a "friendly atmosphere" or "school spirit" seemed to have quite positive attitudes about the school as a whole.

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VIEW FROM THE SCHOOLS

The people who know the most about Boston's public schools are the people who are also most crucial to their improvement: principals, teachers, students and parents whose lives are involved with a particular school, day in and day out. To learn more about how these key groups see their schools, the Citywide Educational Coalition is conducting a year-long project, VIEW FROM THE SCHOOLS. In our first report we presented results of interviews with principals in thirty-three schools. This newsletter reports on interviews with teachers in those same schools. For following issues we will return to those schools to interview students and parents.

HOW TEACHERS SEE IT: Things are better, problems remain

Boston public school teachers agree with their principals that things are better than they were five years ago. However, recent Citywide Educational Coalition interviews with 82 elementary, middle and high school teachers also revealed widespread concern over continuing problems.

Teachers cited two major areas of improvement:

- * Strong leadership from the School Department administration: an emphasis on high educational standards and, specifically, the preparation of citywide curriculum objectives.
- * School practices and resources: There was a widespread sense that something was better, but no single improvement (discipline, programs, etc) seemed consistent or dramatic enough to win mention from more than a few teachers.

Many teachers also said student social attitudes and behavior had improved, some specifically mentioning better race relations. However, only a few teachers said this improved attitude extended to improved academic motivation.

When teachers were asked what was needed to improve education in their schools, three major needs were cited: for more professional interaction/professional development, for more material resources, and for more help in dealing with students who have learning, emotional or discipline problems. Other needs were for more parental involvement and changes in disciplinary practices.

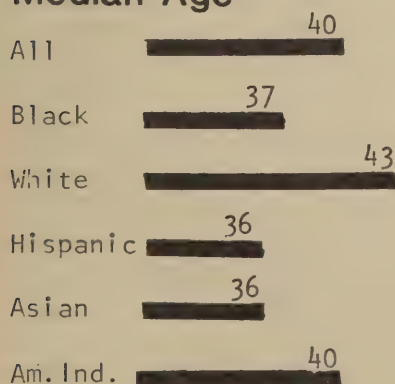
For a full report on how Boston teachers see their schools, see p. 8-11

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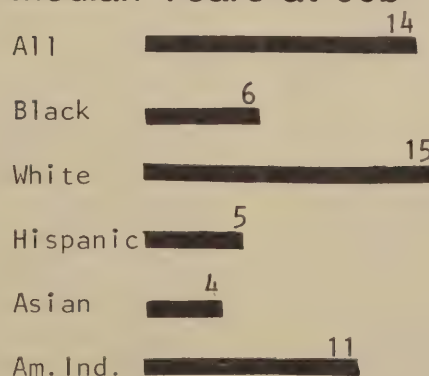
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BPS Teachers: Some Basic Facts

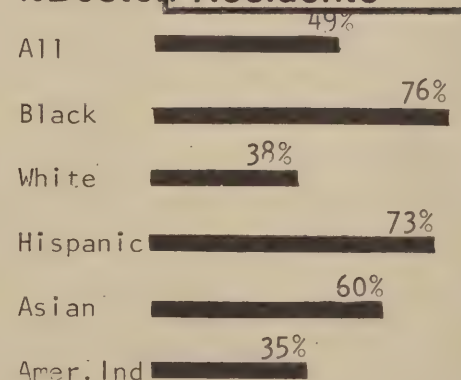
Median Age



Median Years at Job



%Boston Residents



Salary: Starting: \$16,243; Masters + 9 yrs: \$28,935; Masters + 45 credits: \$31,455

Race: BLACK: 21%; WHITE: 71%; HISPANIC: 6%; ASIAN-AMERICAN: 3%; AMERICAN INDIAN: .4%

★ Of 4,428 Boston public school teachers, about 150 have children in the BPS.

Learning for Teachers

One of the strongest needs teachers expressed in our interviews was for more professional development, planning, and opportunities for exchange with other teachers. William Dandridge, acting Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, gave us the following information and comments about programs now available and others he feels are needed:

Staff Development Opportunities

College/university courses

- * teachers sign up on their own
- * salary credit given
- * courses not necessarily related to job or school priorities

Workshops/resources from program directors at Court St.

- * often too infrequent, spread too thin

from the Institute for Professional Development

(BPS staff development organization)
philosophy: "Teachers have the answers."

Impact II

- * grants to teachers to cover expenses in developing and documenting educational programs
- * grants to other teachers to learn how to do the programs developed
- * 67 grants last year, more this year
- * catalog will list programs developed so other teachers can learn about them

teachers' comments... on the quality of the BPS

Note: 20% of the teachers spontaneously commented: "This is a good school." Principal's leadership, small school size and the dedication of the teachers were cited as reasons.

"My husband teaches in the suburbs and they're always putting down the Boston Public Schools. I'm sick of hearing how we're all supposed to be racists, etc. The bad publicity and Judge Garrity, who won't pull out, make it look terrible. I feel good about teaching and all my own children went through the Boston public schools and got a good education." (M)

"There's got to be something wrong with the management of the budget. With spend-

COINS (Curriculum Onsite Inservice)

- * instructor hired for workshop series if group of teachers in a school request training in a certain subject
- * no pay to attend, but salary credit
- * School Department sets priority topics but workshops not restricted to these

Business-funded

Summer Science Fellowships

- * 10 days of workshops
- * stipends for teachers who attend

Fund for Excellence

- * grants for school-initiated projects
- * could include training, but not necessarily

Still Needed

Blocks of time for teachers to meet

- * elementary planning time
- * structured discussions in schools and subject areas, for planning and exchange of ideas

After-school courses

- * covering subjects taught, teaching methods, classroom management, etc.
- * teachers to attend voluntarily
- * should be offered continuously

Training for school leaders

- * principals, department heads, etc.
- * covering supervisory skills, evaluation, counseling and coaching

Method for teachers to share what they learn

- * for example, at summer science workshops

"We need to put teachers in a building together to look at their school and ask, 'What are we doing? What do our students need?' They don't need more circulars about requirements."

--- William Dandridge
acting Deputy Supt.
Curriculum/Instruction.

ing this amount per child we should have a better quality education. Teachers are working very hard, breaking their necks, but we're between a rock and a hard place with the lack of materials, the overcrowding in some classrooms." (E)

"Kids get a good education at this school. The teachers and the administration care. We have high academic standards and on the whole we do well. Our reading scores were low last year but we're working on it and the scores are coming up." (E)

How Teachers See It: Administration

Court St.

There is much support among teachers for the policy directions of the Boston Public School administration under Superintendent Spillane. Many teachers said they were happy with the strong leadership and emphasis on educational quality, or specifically praised the system-wide curriculum objectives, promotional standards or attendance policy.

At the same time many had criticisms of particular policies and felt in general that the administration was trying to raise student achievement by pressuring classroom teachers for results without addressing the very real problems they face.

In addition, many teachers expressed resentment over layoffs, the teacher evaluation system, lack of input in educational planning, and other aspects of their treatment. There was a general sense that the administration and the public were blaming teachers unfairly for the system's problems.

School Level

Teachers were generally less critical of their school administrations, with a few notable exceptions. Principals were most often described as supportive, providing resources, discipline and competent administration. Many of these "supportive" principals, however, seemed to have little involvement with classroom teaching.

Some principals, on the other hand, were credited with strong educational leadership: holding frequent faculty discussions of educational issues, creating opportunities for professional development and establishing school-wide educational strategies. Teachers who described their principals this way were happy with such leadership and generally positive about their schools.

Students and Parents

Students

Teachers expressed a wide range of attitudes toward their students, from the one who said, "I expect a lot of my students and they give it to me. Great bunch of kids!" to the teacher who did "no lecturing to the hoods and dopes. These low groups are paper pushers. Give them worksheets, quick demonstrations. They can't be trusted."

It was mostly elementary school teachers who expressed fondness for their stu-

dents; mostly secondary teachers who complained.

In all, however, teachers cited poor student attitudes as one of three major obstacles to education in their classrooms. The most common complaint --- much more than discipline --- was that many students are not motivated to learn or to do well in school. Most teachers simply deplored this; a few said motivating students was part of their job, but it was difficult.

Teachers were aware of Superintendent Spillane's official "philosophy": "All children can learn." In fact, very few seemed to feel there were problems with the students' mental capacities: attitudes, not abilities, were seen as the main problem.

Some teachers did stress high standards as a way of "weeding out" students with no "academic potential," as one put it. Much more common, however, was an emphasis on helping each student progress.

Parents

Underlying the lack of student motivation, many teachers saw a lack of parental support: general supervision, insistence that school work be done well, etc. Some teachers seemed to blame the parents; others cited a general weakening of the family. Of the teachers who deplored parent attitudes, one did point out that schools themselves sometimes intimidate parents, or fail to reach out to them effectively.

Race/Desegregation

Teachers made no distinctions among black, white and Hispanic students, but a number praised Asians for their serious attitudes and good work habits. One teacher went to far as to suggest that the way to improve our schools was "to study the Chinese baby from birth."

There was little direct comment on desegregation, though a few teachers said outright they felt it had "ruined the system." A number of other teachers deplored the loss of students and resulting weakness of the system's base of support. Others said they felt parent participation had been severely hampered by the loss of neighborhood schools.

Teachers we interviewed were:

67% female, 33% male

24% black, 72% white, 2% Hispanic

38% elementary, 21% middle, 41% high school

How Teachers See It: What's Needed for Better Education

Teachers made many and varied suggestions, but three main needs emerged:

More professional interaction: Many teachers were eager for curriculum ideas and materials, suggestions for teaching methods geared to their students, and opportunities to exchange ideas with other teachers. Elementary school teachers, with no planning time or departmental structure, expressed the strongest need for professional interaction, but in some secondary schools, too, meetings are infrequent and teachers feel they are "on their own."

Sometimes teachers are not aware of the opportunities that are available. One participant in last summer's science workshop praised her principal for keeping faculty informed, adding that her roommate, also a Boston public school teacher, never heard about such things at school.

Several elementary teachers suggested that the BPS publish a catalog of supplementary materials, filmstrips and other resources available at the Campbell Resource Center and outside sources such as the Science Museum.

More material resources: In secondary schools many teachers have only one set of books for several classes, so students cannot take books home. At all levels, shortages of equipment, supplementary curriculum materials and basic supplies are common. In some schools building conditions are bad enough to interfere with teaching; in others, dirt and deterioration undermine morale.

Teachers' testimony to these continuing shortages of the basic materials of good education reinforce the point made by their principals: continuing improvements in the Boston public schools would be seriously jeopardized by cutbacks of materials budgets and staff at the school level.

Help in dealing with students with problems:

Many students in the Boston public schools are working below grade level, or have emotional problems, or are continuously disruptive in class, or have academic problems because their knowledge of English is limited. All of these problems require special attention which many teachers say they cannot provide while teaching the rest of the class.

Many teachers expressed a strong need for help in dealing with these problems:

a "time-out" system for working with disruptive students outside the classroom; smaller classes; more grouping; training in methods for teaching classes with a wide range of skill levels; more social workers and psychologists for direct services and for consultation with teachers; a system of support for regular education students whose knowledge of English is limited.

Another specific suggestion was the establishment of a "transitional first grade" for children not ready for regular first grade.

Focus on Students and Parents

Teachers' comments suggested two other areas needing serious attention:

Student motivation: Teachers have received a clear message from the School Department administration that academic standards must be higher. They have not received a similarly clear message that motivating students to learn is part of the school's job. Nor are they receiving help specifically aimed at finding ways to motivate students.

The implicit assumption seems to be that if schools raise their standards, students will learn more. Teachers are raising a crucial issue: whatever the requirements, students will not learn unless they participate actively because they see good reasons for learning. This is a critical area for School Department policymakers and staff development programs to examine.

School-Parent Cooperation: Most teachers who deplored the low level of parent support suggested no efforts to do anything about it; some declared that such efforts would not work. Others, however, did advocate more outreach to parents, and some reported success in involving parents.

There has been almost no system-wide effort in this area, even though teachers identified lack of parental support as one of three major obstacles to educational improvement. Our interviews suggest that students will continue to be seriously handicapped by the lack of cooperation between school and home until the BPS makes encouragement of parent involvement a system-wide priority.

TEACHERS TALK ABOUT THEIR CLASSES,SCHOOLS

What Is Improved/Worse in the Past Five Years?

improved

Educational leadership from
School Department 34%

"There is an attempt to focus on the business of education."(H)

"More organization, sense of direction"(H)

"Downtown has produced curriculum guides, promotional policies, attendance policy."(M)

Some aspect of school practices 34%

"The principal has done a beautiful job, in that there is less strife, fewer delinquents, very good race relations and no fire alarms --- there used to be one a week." (H)

"There are far more opportunities for kids: school programs, enrichment, tutoring, job opportunities." (H)

"There's more communication from the school administration, keeping teachers informed."(H)

"They're real strong on discipline --- this is a big change. They've cracked down on attendance and coming in late." (H)

Student attitude or behavior 28%

"Students seem more caring about people. The racial issue is improved --- kids don't seem to care so much about color."(H)

"The type of kid who is coming now wants to get some kind of education rather than just coming in off the street." (H)

Teacher morale 15%

"We reached a low about 10 years ago when it was very difficult to make school a happy situation. All of those things have improved over the last five years. Everything is more or less on the upswing now."(H)

Beginnings of more parent support 5%

We interviewed 82 Boston public school regular education teachers, asking each six open-ended questions. In these pages you will find our questions, followed by the most common responses, with the percentage of teachers who said each. Quotes from teachers are added where needed to clarify the response.

E(elementary), M(middle), H(high school)
worse

Note: many answers compared the present with 10 or 20 years ago.

Student attitudes 15%

"The kids themselves have changed in the past nineteen years. Kids were interested in newspapers, kids could speak up and participate. They took pride in their work."(H)

"The attitude of students has gotten worse. Maybe it's a social thing around the country. Kids live for today and don't set their sights for tomorrow."(H)

Teacher morale 14%

"Teacher morale is worse. Teachers feel the system has become more punitive, more out to get us." (H)

"Teacher morale is worse, especially among those who've taught 25 or 30 years." (H)

Reduced resources 15%

Parent support 6%

"When I started teaching fourteen years ago it was in a nice little family-type school. I knew all the parents. Parents' attitude now is worse. We used to have Home and School meetings by room in the auditorium." (E)

"Ten years ago it was better, with more parental push." (H)

Loss of students from BPS 5%

"The loss of white students from the system. I would like to see some of my kids stay after kindergarten (white neighborhood children). The upper grades are black. It's not racially balanced. It's defeating the purpose." (E)

5 More paperwork 5%

What Are the Obstacles to Education in Your Classroom?

Poor student attitude, discipline 38%

"Kids are so disinterested in doing what is asked. They prefer to take a zero than to read. They don't take pride in their work." (H)

"Basically my kids aren't interested. My classes are small so kids who come in after school opens in September are dumped in my room. They don't want to be there and cause discipline problems." (H)

"Occasionally in low general classes you have a student who is not interested nor motivated and only comes in to disrupt." (M)

"The hardest thing is to keep the students interested. There are many good students who are interested all the time. But many are with you some days and not others. If they aren't paying attention they miss things and suffer for it later. I have to keep talking all the time, keep going around the room, push, push, push, or not get the work out of them. I'm talking about the bottom third." (H)

"I won't remark on the kids. Each generation is different and it is up to teachers to adjust with the times." (H)

Lack of material resources 38%

"We need typewriters. Of thirty in my classroom, only twenty function." (H)

"I have 19 textbooks for 120 students." (H)

"There are no funds for magazines, which would motivate the kids to read." (H)

"We have no pencils and we're out of yellow lined paper." (E)

"I have to keep a towel in the window. Without it, it rattles and water pours in. I have no shades so I can't use AV materials, including the controlled reader, although we have that stuff in the building. We were told there was money in the budget for drapes, but we never got the drapes." (E)

"The lack of a gym is a terrible problem here. The kids need outlets for their energy and anger." (E)

Lack of parental support 38%

"I never met a parent who didn't care. They're always receptive. But nothing changes. Teachers are asked to be everything in the classroom: friend, nurse, counselor. Many parents are concerned with living --- food and clothes and heat --- and getting those are monumental tasks." (E)

"No matter what you do for a child in school, if it's not reinforced at home it is for nought." (M)

"Many parents feel kids can be responsible for themselves once they are out of diapers. Parenting is a 24 hour job. Kids need limits and if parents set limits teachers would have fewer discipline problems." (M)

"What hurts us is the breakdown in the home life of the kids. We see more and more girls getting pregnant, boys dropping out of school, parents who feel they can't control them. Lack of a father in the home." (H)

Class size too large 21%

"Class size is ridiculous. Thirty-three kids in a class. It's important and needed to stress writing, but it's overwhelming." (M)

Students lack preparation 20%

"You have to fill in the missing pieces in their education. Their background is deficient --- but not every student. The variety of skill levels makes it tough to teach." (H)

Administrative duties, distractions 19%

"...an army of required paperwork. If I ever win the Megabucks I'm not quitting my job. I'll just hire a full-time secretary; then I could really teach." (H)

Social values undermine education 10%

"Society does not promote concentration on academics. There's the influence of TV, radio, social interactions..." (H)

"What is needed is an atmosphere that looks up to education. The old timers --- my par-

ents, who lost everything when they left Europe --- they knew that the best, the only lasting thing they could give us was education. This is not stressed today." (H)

Emotional/drug use problems 8%

"It becomes chaotic when the class includes a large number of children with emotional problems. Last year I had more than ten. I felt fragmented. Psychologists and so-

cial workers were always in the classroom and calling me at home. I felt it was too much for one person." (E)

"Some of these kids are bombed out of their skull every day --- maybe ten out of a class of thirty. I have requested some type of workshops for students on this, but there has been no response from the administration." (H)

Are the New Curriculum Objectives Realistic for Your Students?

Objectives good/helpful 30%

"It's helpful to have a guide, especially to be able to look at the second grade curriculum and see what the kids have done."

"They are very good and well thought out. It was something that was really needed. The reading/language arts and writing goals are excellent." (E)

The objectives are realistic 11%

The objectives are realistic for some/most of my students 15%

"They are reasonable for average classes, but some kids can't be on grade level because of emotional problems. The teacher or the system shouldn't be judged." (E)

The objectives are unrealistic for many students 20%

"The fifth grade curriculum takes for granted they know fourth grade material, but in reality I have to teach third and fourth grade levels as well." (E)

Would be realistic with adequate resources 9%

"The curriculum objectives are attainable, but not with one set of books, because students can't take books home. So I have to run off papers from the book, get a copy of the workbook and make ditto masters. That wastes teacher time. Then I have to waste class time with kids reading." (M)

"I have about fifty kids (out of 200) who can't read. What they need to know is there (in the curriculum) but my ability to get these kids to learn it --- no way! So many are reading far below grade level. I have 766 kids. They have to have U.S. History. But they don't give me anything geared to these kids. Then if I fall short, it's my fault." (H)

Too much material in short time 8%

(on elementary science and social studies):
"We don't have that much time in the day. The minutes are given, but then there are special projects, holiday programs, days off." (E)

Differences in Emphasis: Black/White Teachers

In most responses to our questions, blacks and whites were similar, but in some they differed. (Since we interviewed only regular education, not bilingual teachers, Hispanics and Asians were under-represented.)

The students

Black teachers were much more likely to point to lack of parental support as a cause of poor student performance. They were also more likely to blame society's failure to value education. White teachers were more likely to mention students' emotional problems as obstacles to learning.

Whites were also more likely to say that one of their classroom goals was to instill responsibility and good work habits in their students.

The system

Black teachers were more likely to praise their school administration, less likely to criticize Court St. in some areas, but equally prone to criticize its educational policies. Whites expressed more resentment over the treatment of teachers, especially --- but not only --- layoffs. White teachers also more frequently pointed to the need for more material resources.

What Kind of Professional Support Do You Have?

Principal

Principal is supportive

45%

"The building support is good. We get what we need when it's in the principal's power. Same with disciplinary back-up." (E)

"The administration is generally supportive. Initiative, however, comes from the teachers." (M)

Principal is strong leader

23%

"The morale of teachers and students has gone up 100% because of the principal, who comes and gets involved. There is more open communication at weekly meetings where we discuss what is coming up, issues or problems in the classroom. The orderly atmosphere has made the building more at ease. More education is going on." (M)

"The principal is very demanding that teachers do a good job teaching." (E)

Discipline back-up is effective

15%

Discipline inadequate/inconsistent

6%

Principal too authoritarian

3%

Others in School

Other teachers

48%

"I get the most support from my colleagues, both in the building and teacher friends. We bounce things off each other, get ideas from each other. It's been my biggest help through the years." (E)

University/business/state/federal

21%

"Boston has always had external support. That's been important: Chapter 1, 636. Now we seem to be getting even more." (E)

Social service/special needs

16%

"We have Chapter 1, speech therapists, 766 people. There's lots of interaction among the staff about the placement and treatment of kids." (E)

Academic administrators

13%

"The new middle school Director of Instruction position has been wonderful. She

picks up on and supports everything I want to do." (M)

I have no professional support

9%

"As far as I'm concerned, my room is my island. I go to my island and do my thing." (H)

School well supplied with materials

8%

I don't need support

6%

Court St.: Central Administration

Program support is helpful

28%

"We receive kits for teaching language and math units." (E)

"Court St. has a language department that has meetings several times a year and sends out a newsletter. They are anxious to be of help. They take the initiative to send out suggestions. The discussions are helpful but they could be more often." (M)

"It's helpful to me to update in inservice refresher courses in science at the Campbell Resource Center." (M)

Central administration irrelevant

11%

"Court St. might as well be on the moon." (M)

Policies

Approve of promotional standards

8%

"The promotional standards are good and I say, 'It's about time!'" (H)

Concern about effects of promotional policy

15%

"Implementation should be done from the first grade on. You can't expect middle and high school kids to make up in one year what they missed in seven." (H)

"The promotional standards are a joke. There's no money for extra materials to try new teaching techniques, no extra staff, no remediation. The problem is thrown right back on the classroom teacher." (E)

Too many directives, priorities

11%

"They ask for a teacher to do a thousand things in a day without enough time or

assistance. It's as if the people at Court St. have never been in a seventh grade. I'm responsible for 200 children. It's an overload. We are responsible for curriculum objectives, extra tasks, paperwork. They have no idea what it's realistic for a teacher to accomplish." (M)

Too much emphasis on tests 9%

"Some of the things pulled out for testing are on too high a level. They take time from things that are more important to teach." (H)

"I don't approve of the way they test. Multiple choice is OK for the SAT, but I want to know what my students have learned and what they haven't. I can only tell that from a written test. If we're pushing writing, aren't multiple choice tests defeating the purpose?" (H)

Dissatisfied with treatment of teachers 25%

"I was laid off for three years, then back on a provisional contract last year. Be-

fore I was laid off I got excess notices every year for five or six years. There's a lot of anxiety, a lot of turmoil. Pack up all your materials every June, get your school assignment September first. It's gotta get to me. It's gotta be transferred to the kids, though I try to be conscientious.

"I have made calls about my job situation that people at Court St. have simply not answered. This year I found out at nine in the morning I was to be here at eleven. I stayed up all night the first couple of weeks of school, preparing." (E)

"The teacher evaluations delivered an almost staggering blow to morale in this school. People with twelve, fourteen years in the classroom got satisfactory instead of excellent for frivolous reasons. I see no evidence the evaluations were done any other way than by checklist. The spirit is punitive. There's no collegiality, sense of equality or common goal. There's a lot of resistance to suggestions that come in that form." (H)

Differences in Emphasis: Elementary/Middle/High

The Students

Since many more secondary school teachers saw student attitudes as a problem (with discipline especially difficult in middle school), it is encouraging that they were also more likely to say student attitudes have improved. However, it was mainly high school teachers who called for a return to old-fashioned, strict discipline.

More secondary teachers said students' lack of academic skills was a problem, and they were more likely to want to divide students by the level of their work. Kindergarten and first grade teachers were also concerned about students' unequal preparation because of their wide variety of pre-school experiences.

Elementary school teachers were most likely to point out their students' need for more support: from parents and from social services at school.

Policies

Because many of their students were working below grade level, high school teachers were the most worried about failures under the new promotional policy. Concern about over-testing and pressure for curriculum "coverage" was more common among elementary teachers.

Teachers' status in the system

Middle school teachers were most likely to call for more input into educational decisions. Those who complained about the teacher evaluation system were all high school teachers.

Elementary school teachers were more likely to say they didn't have enough time for all they were being asked to do, complaining of too many competing directives and priorities from Court St., lack of preparation time, need for aides and specialists, and the burden of administrative duties such as paperwork. Elementary teachers also expressed the most unmet need for workshops, staff development, and professional interaction in general.

In spite of the pressures, elementary teachers more often expressed pleasure in teaching and were more likely to volunteer the view that theirs was a good school.

What Is Needed for Better Education in Your School?

Supports for teaching: professional development, curriculum resources, planning and planning time 45%

"I'd like to have more workshops like the one I went to at the Science Museum, where they gave us kits we could use in class."

(E)

(to deal with the wide range of student skill levels) "the answer is 'individualization' but it's lip service. There's no training to teach us how to do it, no one in the building to show us techniques."

(H)

"We need good staff development, especially on policy decisions like curriculum objectives and promotional standards. We need to sit down face to face with the Kim Marshalls and Bill Dandridges (curriculum policy officials) of this system and ask questions and get answers. Court St. cannot just tell principals to tell their teachers." (E)

"It was a loss when they eliminated the supervisory staff. It's something the regular classroom teacher misses, that we've always had in Chapter 1: someone from the outside to give feedback." (E)

"Please put all the extended day kindergarten teachers together so we can talk!"

(E)

"We need planning time so teachers can talk to each other, get things run off, contact parents." (E)

BPS Teacher Evaluation:

BPS teachers are evaluated every year, according to a system revised in the latest negotiations between the School Department and the Boston Teachers Union. This contract for the first time adds the rating "excellent" to the previous ones: "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory."

The evaluation system:

- * evaluations by principal or designee
- * at least once a year
- * based on classroom visits
- * written report to teacher within ten days
- * teacher rated E (excellent), S (satisfactory) or U (unsatisfactory) on each of 25 standards defined by the School Department, plus an overall rating
- * If rating is U, monthly visits and

"Imposing programs on teachers without giving them some input results in shoddy work." (H)

"We need respect from downtown for the professionalism of teachers, and real coordinated school planning time to sit down as a stable faculty and plan new programs."

(M)

More staff for particular needs:

41%

individual attention in classroom

"Small class size would eliminate the need for supplementary programs. Fifteen would be ideal in elementary school. Anything higher and discipline problems multiply."

(E)

social service, special needs

"Our number one need is a guidance counselor and a full time social worker." (E)

"When there's a child I'm concerned about I need a mental health professional to consult. Should I be concerned? I don't feel comfortable being the one to decide whether to advise the mother to seek help."

(E)

specific tasks teachers now do, such as elementary specialists and aides for clerical work

Material resources

21%

"To pick up student and teacher morale with paint and fixing up." (M)

evaluations are required until rating becomes S; if overall rating is U four times, teacher may be recommended for dismissal

- * ratings of U are to include "diagnosis" (description of the problem) and "prescription" (methods for improvement).

Purpose

According to the School Department, the purpose is to provide teachers with constructive professional feedback to improve teaching. The secondary purpose is to document grounds for dismissal of unsatisfactory teachers.

Implementation

To teach principals to use the system as it was intended, the School Department holds meetings and circulates a booklet, giving examples of "observable behaviors" for the

"updated books and equipment." (H)
"locks for the doors, clocks that work." (H)
"The sports facilities are terrible: no showers, no playing fields." (H)

Changes in disciplinary practices 20%

"We need a special room in the school to send kids who are problems in class. We should also be able to keep kids who are walkers after school." (E)

"We need a return to the old code of ethics, dress and behavior. A stricter manner of speaking. It helps in keeping order in life and in academics. Not doing these things just continues the lack of structure in the home." (H)

More parental involvement 25%

"We got a memo to call home if the kid is absent. I'll do it, but it's really the home's responsibility." (E)

"Usually I call all the parents at the beginning of the year to introduce myself. I try to call later on to tell them good things, not just problems. The parents are very cooperative if I call.

I've only had two parents in all my years of teaching who were not cooperative. I always found that parents saw the same side of the kid as I did." (E)

"Schools need to organize parents and get them to be more supportive and understanding." (M)

"Teachers and administrators have to extend themselves to parents. Many teachers have the attitude that the parents are below us. We have to get rid of that. We're responsible for their kids. So many parents have had bad experiences in public school and see us in the same vein. When they come up they're nervous, they can't talk. It's different in suburban schools. And kids read into it: 'How can you care about me as a student when I know how you feel about my mom?'" (M)

Books updated, easier to read 9%

Leveling/grouping 9%

...and a final comment:

"In the Boston Public Schools I don't think about wishing for anything any more. I just think of the kids I have and how I can help." (E)

standards, and examples of "prescriptions" for helping teachers improve.

Built into the policy are several safeguards against unfair dismissals. Any evaluation containing a U rating on any item must be sent to the central administration for review. After two U ratings, the Community Superintendant must visit; the department encourages principals to involve others as well. Finally, the process of dismissing a teacher is so complicated and time-consuming, say School Department lawyers, it discourages over-use and may even inhibit principals from trying to dismiss teachers when they should.

The union viewpoint

The Boston Teachers Union charges that in spite of these efforts, implementation of the evaluation system is inconsistent and biased. Although some principals, the union says, really use the system to make constructive suggestions, many fill out evaluation forms in a routine way that means little, and a few are "headhunters," 11

seeking to dismiss some teachers and intimidate others.

The union says the introduction of an "excellent" rating, which it opposed, has demoralized teachers, because principals' criteria for E ratings vary and teachers now see "satisfactory" as a negative comment. Some principals' evaluations, the union charges, reflect favoritism. The union also objects to considering extra work outside the classroom; the union position is that only classroom teaching should be considered in evaluations.

Results:

This year the School Department asked the School Committee to dismiss eight teachers; of these, five resigned and three were formally dismissed. Cases are now being prepared for the dismissal of four more teachers this school year.

According to Deputy Supt. Joseph McDonough, however, more U ratings are brought up to S. It is much less common for principals to begin dismissal action.

BPS Teachers:

ALL BPS TEACHERS: 4,428

RACE:	B	W	H	A	AI
	21%	71%	6%	3%	.4%

B(black), W(white), H(Hispanic), A(Asian-American), AI(American Indian)

Their Assignments

	All	B	W	H	A	AI
Kinder-						
garten*	162	12%	85%	.6%	--	--
elem. *	762	40%	67%	.9%	.8%	.1%
advanced						
work cl.	56	21%	79%	--	--	--
reading	365	17%	82%	.3%	.5%	.3%
art/						
music/						
theater*	140	36%	60%	--	3%	.7%
phys.ed.*	121	37%	60%	2%	.8%	--
math/sci	433	26%	84%	1%	.7%	--
Eng/soc.						
studies	392	21%	78%	.3%	.3%	.5%
foreign						
lang.*	112	9%	85%	.4%	.3%	--
voc.ed.	354	17%	78%	4%	1%	.6%
special						
ed.	873	19%	78%	2%	.7%	.7%
biling.						
sped.	69	12%	28%	58%	3%	--
bilin-						
gual	437	17%	27%	35%	20%	.5%
admin.						
assign*	13	15%	77%	8%	--	--

*assignments with a racial distribution quite different from the system as a whole

On Teaching in Boston

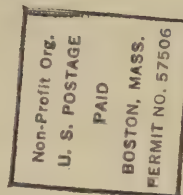
"The classroom teacher has been devalued in the eyes of students, parents, administration and community." (H)

"I have always enjoyed teaching. I look forward to getting out of bed and going to work every single day and have for 31 years." (E)

"We were just reaching a nice plateau when the layoffs and turmoil started. Now it's getting the same way, but I'm afraid school closings will affect teacher morale.

There's a fear that they'll dump us in the pot and stir us up again." (E)

more inside



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INSIDE: How Teachers See It
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CityWide Educational Coalition Newsletter

JANUARY 1985

VIEW FROM THE SCHOOLS

The people who know the most about Boston's public schools are the people who are also most crucial to their improvement: principals, teachers, students and parents whose lives are involved with a particular school, day in and day out. In order to learn how these key groups see their schools and their roles within them, the Citywide Educational Coalition is conducting a year-long project, VIEW FROM THE SCHOOLS, in which we are interviewing principals, teachers, students and parents in a randomly selected group of thirty-three Boston public schools. This newsletter on Boston Public School principals is the first report in this series.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: A New Optimism

Through our interviews we sensed that principals were starting the current school year with a new spirit of optimism, of confidence in improvement. Underneath, however, was a wariness about the ability of the city to keep up the support needed to continue improvements.

Principals gave a few main reasons for this year's optimism:

- + STABILITY: This is the first year since 1982 without major teacher layoffs and turnover.
- + MORE RESOURCES: Staff, especially reading teachers, and money for books.
- + CENTRAL DIRECTION: Better management and high educational standards from BPS.
- + STUDENT ATTITUDES: Improvement in general attitude and decline in racial tensions.

The unmet need most often emphasized was PAINT---so buildings could aid, not undermine, morale. Other facilities improvements and staff development were also needs often cited.

Principals' descriptions of their schools also left some unanswered questions:

- + Will the optimism expressed in the beginning continue throughout the year?
- + Do racial and class tensions seem as minor to teachers and students as to principals?
- + What philosophy of discipline guides treatment of students who cause problems?
- + Do teachers, parents and students agree with most principals that class size is all right?
- + How do parents see their role in education? Why the estrangement between school and home?

We hope future newsletters on teachers, students and parents will shed light on these questions and deepen the picture of Boston public schools presented in VIEW FROM THE SCHOOLS.

BPS Policy: Principal Should Be Educational Leader

In his opening speech to principals this year, Supt. Spillane said the emphasis in educational improvement should now shift to school-based initiatives, making principals key figures in educational change.

PRINCIPALS, Spillane said, SHOULD SEE THEIR ROLE AS EDUCATIONAL LEADER, NOT JUST BUILDING MANAGER. Specifically they should:

- + Visit classrooms frequently and hold teachers to high standards in methods, curriculum and use of materials
- + Make sure teachers hold high expectations for all students and involve all students, not just the most successful, in classroom activities
- + Make sure time in school is used well
- + Make sure the school has a truly multi-cultural atmosphere

- + Promote mainstreaming of special needs and bilingual students

In addition, PRINCIPALS SHOULD INVOLVE TEACHERS IN A NEW "COLLEGIAL RELATIONSHIP," HELPING TO PLAN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS.

Several system-wide programs support these approaches to the principalship:

Schools participating in the School Based Management and School Improvement Programs have organized groups of teachers, parents and administrators to plan school improvements.

The system provides professional development resources for principals through the Harvard Principals' Center, which offers workshops, speakers, consultants and on-going discussion groups to principals.

BPS Principals: Some Basic Facts

	median years in BPS:	% women	% Boston residents:	median age:
ALL BPS principals.....	25-30	25%	45%	50-55
BPS black principals.....	15-20	41%	70%	40's
BPS white principals.....	25-30	16%	35%	50's
BPS other minority principals.....	10	66%	66%	30's

Boston's principals are 24% black, 72% white, and 4% other minority.

What our research found

SOURCE: BPS DEPT. OF PERSONNEL

WHITE PRINCIPALS ARE OLDER AND HAVE BEEN IN THE SYSTEM LONGER. Half the white principals have 25-30 years of seniority or more. Asian and Hispanic principals are youngest and have the least seniority; black principals are in-between. More than half the principals, however, have been in their current positions ten years or less; many were appointed in 1976 when Judge Garrity ordered that every building have its own principal.

WOMEN ARE MOST LIKELY TO BE PRINCIPALS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, as is the pattern in most school systems. Among black and other minority principals, however, there is a greater percentage of women and black women are more likely than white women to be leading middle and high schools.

MOST PRINCIPALS HAVE STRONG LOCAL TIES: A large majority of black and other minority principals live in Boston; about a third of white principals do. Almost 4/5 of the white principals we interviewed, and about 2/3 of the black principals, attended the BPS. Almost all the white principals we interviewed, but only 1/4 of the black principals, attended college in Boston, most of these at Boston College or Boston University.

For Principals, Boston is Different

Although many Boston Public School principals are optimistic, they face difficulties different from those in other communities. Two principals with experience in Boston and elsewhere (a suburb and a small city) reflected for us on the differences:

STUDENTS: The suburban high school has fewer students with serious problems: 70% to 80% are working on grade level or above.

RESOURCES: Boston schools have fewer teachers and guidance counselors per student, less time for teachers to work together, more time wasted coping with poor building conditions. Other schools' greater resources seem tied to greater political support and a higher percentage of residents with children in public schools.

PARENTS: Both said in their other schools parents were more involved--coming to meetings, backing the school in fighting for more funds. In the suburban school,

parents visit more often with requests and complaints, less often because their children are in academic or discipline trouble.

DECISION-MAKING: In the small city system, the budget process includes open hearings where principals and parents can argue for particular programs. In the suburban system, principals have power to set major educational priorities and to hire staff, subject to central approval.

Because of the size and complexity of Boston's system, principals here have to meet many program and reporting requirements for desegregation, special education, bilingual and vocational education, as well as School Department policies. One principal said this results in lack of focus, with principals receiving many directives but in the end being judged mostly by their students' scores on Metropolitan Achievement tests.

Interview Report: How Principals See Boston Public Schools Students

MOST PRINCIPALS SAY STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND SKILLS ARE IMPROVING, though most students are still working below grade level. Scores on standardized tests are increasing, though some principals were skeptical about other schools' reports of dramatic test score gains. Principals differed in opinion about students' motivation to do well in school, but some made comments like these:

"Kids aren't interested in a program" said a middle school principal, "unless it's relevant...(we expected him to say 'to themselves' or 'to their lives')...to their getting better marks," he finished.

Another described a general improvement in student attitudes: "This has been a trend for the past few years. They seem better behaved. They are actually volunteering to get involved in things like the marching band. There was a time when you'd post things on the bulletin board and no one would respond. Today these kids are showing interest."

Urban Education

PRINCIPALS' COMMENTS ABOUT URBAN EDUCATION REFLECTED SCHOOL DEPARTMENT POLICY. When asked about their response to the needs of low income and minority students, principals stressed three main themes, all aspects of the school department's "All children can learn" philosophy.

Some said the most important thing was to maintain high standards for all students; others emphasized the need to provide extra support (social services, counseling, cultural opportunities, efforts to build self-esteem). A few said they make it a point to ignore race and class differences among students. Only one or two slipped into traditional condescending statements such as "You practically have to live their academic lives for them."

Some more typical comments:

"The school must maintain standards, beginning in K-1. Kids have to know there's a standard though they may be poor or black, etc. School must be sensitive to their needs, but give them the ability to deal with the real world."

"Never think about the fact that the kids are low income and minority. If the kids don't feel that they are disadvantaged, we don't tell them."

"I've got to remember every morning what many of these kids have been through before they got to school this morning. I can't have a 'sink or swim' attitude. I can raise the bar to six feet, but first I have to make sure the kids have everything they need to get over it."

Discipline/School Climate

MOST PRINCIPALS SAID DISCIPLINE WAS NOT A SERIOUS PROBLEM: SCHOOLS ARE UNDER CONTROL. Talking in class is the main violation reported in elementary school; discipline is more of an issue at middle and high schools, with some reports of fights. Tardiness and truancy, however, are the most widespread problems, principals said.

Several principals pointed out that the citywide Code of Discipline has been helpful in backing up their efforts, providing clear procedures, and discouraging violations by spelling out specific consequences.

Principals also described their own strategies for discipline:

MOST-USED STRATEGY---RUNNING A TIGHT SHIP: publicizing clear rules, forbidding radios, hats, etc., and especially (in middle and high schools), "allowing little place and time for trouble to start" through a tight pass system, teachers watching corridors, restrictions on locker and rest room visits. CONTACTING PARENTS: Frequent phone calls for discipline, attendance or academic problems; "early warning" or "pre-suspension" systems to bring parents in before trouble gets serious.

USING "TIME OUT" OR IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION: A few schools manage to staff such programs; more expressed a strong need for them. TALKING OUT PROBLEMS: Only a few principals mentioned approaches like these:

"Have the kid analyze what he's doing wrong, how he's hurting himself and the school, and decide what he can do to change."

"The most serious cause of problems is kids instigating things among other kids: 'He said this about you,' 'He said, she said.' Our teachers are good at dealing with this. They get all the kids involved together. It is the teachers' business to involve themselves, because the next step is a fight. An experienced teacher can work through a good 'he said, she said' in ten minutes."

CREATING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE: Some principals greet students by name each morning; some make extra efforts to keep classes small; middle schools have broken up into clusters. The more personal relationship possible in small groups, said one principal, "is what it takes to get a kid to make a commitment."

In addition a number of principals said it is important that psychologists or psychological counselors be available.

Teachers

MOST PRINCIPALS SAID TEACHERS IN THEIR SCHOOLS WERE "EXCELLENT" OR "VERY GOOD;" OTHERS POINTED TO PROBLEMS.

Most principals agreed that teacher morale and performance has improved because of stability after years of layoffs and turnover and because of principals' own efforts at attracting good teachers and weeding out others (through formal dismissal or teacher transfer).

Principals who described problems in their teaching staff mentioned conflicts of philosophy, negative attitudes or low expectations of minority students, and a general need for improved and updated skills. Some said they were disappointed in their teachers' lack of activity and initiative, but many principals said their teachers volunteer for school-wide responsibilities, give their own time to school projects and participate in school planning (some through the School Based Management or School Improvement Program).

LACK OF TIME FOR TEACHER DISCUSSION IS A MAJOR PROBLEM IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, SAY SOME PRINCIPALS, since elementary school teachers have no free time during the day. Other principals seemed to feel monthly inservice meetings and informal discussion were enough to maintain staff discussion.

There is great variation in the amount of teacher discussion scheduled by principals in middle and high schools. Some have weekly meetings by department, cluster or grade; some meet far less often.

PRINCIPALS EXPRESSED A WIDE RANGE OF DIFFERENT VIEWS ABOUT HOW TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING. At one end of the spectrum was an emphasis on demanding performance; at the other a stress on supporting professional development:

"The teachers know if they don't do their job I am on their back. Recommending teachers for dismissal is very hard to do, but word gets out to teachers --- do your job or get out."

"To influence teaching you have to have a good relationship. I respect the teachers as professionals, although I can get peeved. As an administrator one of my roles is to look at the development of the person as a teacher."

The Principal's Role

WHEN PRINCIPALS DESCRIBED THEIR ROLE IN THE SCHOOL, THEY MENTIONED A WIDE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDING:

WALKING AROUND THE SCHOOL was frequently mentioned as important: to see students, know what's happening, be available to teachers, and "The principal's presence is very important to discipline...kids need to see you, to know you care. More important, teachers know you are there."

DEALING WITH THINGS THAT COME UP: such as parent and teacher visits and building crises (mostly in elementary school).

"One evening I gave a lecture on the role of principal to a group of Harvard graduate students. The next morning the xerox machine broke, and as I was kneeling on the floor pouring toner through a funnel I thought, "If they could see me now.'"

"PAPERWORK," mostly reports required by the School Department and various state and court-ordered programs. Some said they delegate or neglect paperwork, others do it outside school hours, others seem to see doing it as their main function.

OBTAINING RESOURCES: from routine reporting of overcrowded classes to major efforts to secure program and building resources from the School Department. A few principals also seek outside resources from businesses or foundations.

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING: some principals seemed to do this very little; others are taking much initiative in identifying problems and finding solutions, from innovative scheduling schemes that maximize time for reading to special attendance improvement programs.

SHAPING SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY AND TONE: Many principals seemed to see their job as simply "running a school." Others are trying to develop the school in a definite direction.

One such headmaster said the atmosphere of his high school has "turned around" through "small successes constantly reinforced, constantly repeated and brought to the students' attention: the jobs program, minor sports, our reading and math scores, the theatre arts program. The staff and I all know how well we're doing and how hard we're working at it."

Interview Report Principals on Schools (continued)

Central BPS Administration

MOST PRINCIPALS SAID CURRENT SCHOOL DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMS ARE HELPFUL:

Citywide curriculum objectives are regarded as helpful by most principals.

Middle school reorganization (special staff to supervise instruction) was also praised, along with the assignment of more reading teachers to middle schools.

Code of Discipline, as mentioned, was seen as helpful.

Promotional standards are generally viewed as positive but difficult (likely to cause many students to be held back) though a minority opinion opposed the standards as unrealistically "monolithic," not allowing for differences in present achievement level or individual learning style.

Overemphasis on test scores was a more widespread worry, with some principals feeling that they were being asked to do many things but judged only on the basis of student scores on standardized math and reading tests, and others pointing to the cheating they said was taking place in response to the pressure to increase scores.

Superintendent Spillane was explicitly mentioned by some who credited his administration with improved management and a new priority on educational quality, though one principal characterized the current mood of improvement as "a lot of PR hogwash."

COMPLAINTS ABOUT COURT ST. GENERALLY INVOLVED PERFORMANCE, NOT POLICY:

Inadequate resources to back up policy: Principals wanted funds to buy recommended textbook series and materials for teaching the new curriculum, especially in science.

Increased paperwork, especially this year, was a common complaint -- unnecessary and redundant reporting, with different departments asking for the same information. Many particularly mentioned a recent request to report the number and dimensions of each piece of furniture in the school.

Overriding principals' decisions: Many mentioned last September's inservice meeting, which some had planned, only to learn on Friday that their teachers were to go elsewhere for the meeting on Monday.

Delivery problems: Some principals mentioned a continuing problem of staff posi-

tions unfilled when school starts, though some said there has been improvement.

Responses to requests for equipment and building repairs seem to vary: "They're mostly responsive," said one principal, "but then, I'm not apt to take no for an answer." At the other extreme, several said time they spend "wresting things from Court St." is a major problem. There was an impression that favorites had more success: "Court St. is the fast track and I'm not on it."

Principals agreed that some people in administration were very helpful; with others, "Sometimes you get the feeling you're a mark on paper." Cumbersome procedures were seen as the main problem by principals who want freedom to order their own supplies. Even now some bypass Court St., finding resources from parent fund-raising, local businesses and foundation grants.

Desegregation

MOST PRINCIPALS SAID RACIAL TENSION IS NO LONGER A MAJOR PROBLEM, BUT THE DEGREE OF TRUE INTEGRATION VARIES.

Many elementary and some middle school principals said students form real interracial friendships, playing and eating lunch in mixed groups. Others say students still socialize mainly with others of the same race; this separation seems to increase in middle and high school, but many interracial friendships are formed there too, mainly through activities like clubs and sports.

Most principals said race is not a factor in student-teacher relationships. Among teachers, attitudes seem to vary from school to school. One principal reported a somewhat hostile truce among his teachers after bitterness surrounding the 1981 layoff, while another said his faculty serves as a role model of interracial friendship.

MOST PRINCIPALS ACCEPT AS GIVEN THAT THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COURT-ORDERED DESEGREGATION PLAN MUST BE MET. Many, however, pointed out its negative effects: causing students to withdraw; ending school-community ties and thereby weakening parent participation; provoking racial hostility. Others complained of practical problems with buses and increased paperwork.

Others, definitely in the minority, were enthusiastic about desegregation's bene-

fits: developing interracial acceptance and friendships, bringing more community attention and resources to education.

Parents

MOST PRINCIPALS SAID PARENT SUPPORT IS INADEQUATE. They want parents to be involved, not as activists, but "to support the school, assist with homework . . . the most important thing is to convey to their kids the idea that school is very important."

Most parents, principals say, fail to give their children's schoolwork enough supervision and attention. When one principal sent home suggestions for parents, some complained. "They feel strongly that it's our job --- to teach the kids --- not theirs." A smaller number of principals said parents do help. (While we were there one elementary principal received a call from a parent seeking advice about how to help her child practice cursive writing.)

Principals seemed generally dissatisfied with parent attendance at Open Houses and other school functions, though some said attendance was good. Some principals reported that their schools had active parent groups or said parents had written letters, raised money, or otherwise backed the school when asked.

SOME PRINCIPALS ARE SO DISCOURAGED THEY HAVE STOPPED SCHEDULING EVENTS FOR PARENTS, WHILE OTHERS REPORT SUCCESS FROM PARENT OUTREACH EFFORTS, including:

- * frequent phone calls (with good as well as bad news)
- * calls to encourage meeting attendance
- * events featuring student exhibits or performances ("Parents would forge streams and climb mountains to see their kids perform.")
- * Open Houses or tours during school hours so parents can observe classes
- * requiring parents to pick up report cards
- * handbooks and newsletters for parents

Community and School

SEVERAL PRINCIPALS REPORTED INCREASED COMMUNITY RESPECT AND INTEREST, including an increase in the number of students attending their school. "In the past, the community has not been very supportive of this school. Not many local kids attend. But the community has made a turnaround in the last three years. (A local hospital) has requested to be a partner. (A manufacturing firm) and the Board of Trade have helped in various ways."

MANY SEEM TO ACCEPT AS PERMANENT THE COMMUNITY ABANDONMENT OF THEIR SCHOOLS, BUT OTHERS ACTIVELY RECRUIT STUDENTS THROUGH:

- * principal and staff door knocking and visiting community centers
- * letters and Open Houses for parents of eligible students
- * a planned three-year "media blitz" to improve community attitudes

What the Schools Need

(Compiled from principal interviews -- not all principals mentioned all points)

Discipline/Student Support

BETTER GUIDANCE PROGRAM: now elementary schools have no guidance counselors; middle and high schools need more counselors, especially black and bilingual, and, according to many, reorientation: "real counselors, not paper pushers."

MORE SOCIAL SERVICES

IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION/"TIME OUT" STAFF ALTERNATIVES for serious discipline problems: separate programs or schools

Staff

SPECIALISTS: elementary music, art, etc.

TEACHERS for particular programs

SMALLER CLASSES (only a few said this)

CONTROL OVER SELECTION: now principals can choose among the three most senior applicants for most vacancies, but not those occurring during the school year

Staff Development

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PEOPLE to give teachers suggestions not tied to evaluations

MORE WORKSHOPS AND CLASSES

INSERVICE MEETINGS controlled by school

ELEMENTARY PLANNING and meeting time

PRINCIPALS'DEVELOPMENT: help with time management, methods of supervision, etc.

Decision-making

SCHOOL BUDGET: more school control

ORDERING SUPPLIES: authorization for schools to order directly

Facilities

PAINT!!! (most often mentioned)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION FACILITIES

REPAIRS to buildings, especially windows

IMPROVED MAINTENANCE (in some cases)

Materials

BOOKS, especially funds for recommended textbook series

EQUIPMENT, especially for science

Who Becomes Principal? Selection Process Changing

This fall the School Committee adopted a new plan for selecting principals, modifying the process ordered by Judge Garrity in 1976.

The Old Way

Before 1976, principal vacancies were filled from a ranked list. A teacher's rank on the list was based on a score that included points for evaluations by both principal and central administrators.

Since principals rated their teachers on a curve, only a few in each school could get the necessary A+. Ambitious teachers often vied for principals' A+ grades by volunteering for extra duties and doing personal favors. A strong unwritten rule said top grades should go to those who had waited longest.

It is widely reported that, despite the formal process, School Committee members and senior administrators could give out principals' jobs. Contributions to School Committee reelection funds were often necessary. One School Committee member, when asked to vote for the appointment of a highly-regarded candidate for principal, replied, "But I don't know him." An offer was made to introduce the candidate. "You don't seem to understand," the Committee member said pointedly. "I mean I don't know him and I don't vote for people I don't know."

Boston's FinCom, during a formal investigation, collected extensive testimony about pressures put on School Department employees to buy tickets for testimonial dinners for School Committee members. Careful records were kept of who had contributed. People who refused were barred from promotions. In addition to these practices, there are many stories of more direct pay-offs to School Committee members.

Political and administrative conformity characterized the system of principal selection.

Since 1976

For these reasons, and specifically to increase the small number of black principals, Judge Garrity in 1976 ordered the system to select principals with a new procedure in which candidates were screened and interviewed by a school-based committee including parents, teachers, community members, administrators and (high school) students, chaired by the Community Superintendent. Finalists were then interviewed and

ranked by the Council of Community Superintendents, then principals were selected by the Superintendent and School Committee.

The 1976 order also set a goal of 20% black administrators (now reached) and 10% other minority.

There is widespread agreement that opening up the principal selection process to parents, teachers and community members was positive, but many feel the system was too cumbersome. Others pointed to the possibility that principal candidates or Community Superintendents could manipulate the process by encouraging certain parents and teachers to serve on the committee.

The Spillane Years

Impatient with the cumbersome screening process and anxious to reorganize the administration, Superintendent Spillane has made dozens of acting principal appointments in the last three years. In contrast to the previous practice of selecting almost all white principals, many of Spillane's appointments were black, Asian or Hispanic principals.

Critics charge that some of these acting appointments were unnecessary, that their real purpose was to bypass other input and place handpicked people into key spots. Six of these acting appointees are going into their second or third year, still without going through the screening process.

Supporters of Spillane's appointments argue that they put the best person into the job.

New Policies

The new principal selection procedure cuts the number of Screening Committee members in half and eliminates the review by the Council of Community Superintendents. Parents still have the largest single bloc of votes, but can be outnumbered if teachers and administrators vote together.

The new plan also includes a deadline, January, 1986, for reaching the goal of 10% other minority administrators, and continues the commitment to bring the percentage of black administrators to 25%.

At the same time the School Committee voted to limit the Superintendent's power to make acting appointments. The new policy forbids acting appointments to permanent vacancies except for "compelling reasons;" limits them to six months; and requires that the formal screening process begin within ten days after an acting appointment is made.

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INSIDE: Boston Public School Principals:
Who Are They? How Do They See Their Schools?

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUDGET: Problems Ahead

One of the accomplishments of the present Superintendent has been close monitoring of school spending and the elimination of deficits. Further, the administration has at last achieved stability of staff, an absolutely essential ingredient for improved student achievement. This stability has a price tag, though, as does paying staff the salaries they deserve, and restoring needed programs while slowly adding new ones. Budgets in the last three years have risen from \$229M to \$245M to \$259M. The School Department has little capability to evaluate programs, so improvements are often made by adding, rather than changing, programs.

There is serious question whether this year's improvements will be able to continue. This year's \$259M budget includes only \$246M in city appropriation; the rest comes from accumulated surpluses and some federal reimbursement money the city is allowing the schools to keep. In addition, the schools must pay another \$10M in raises next year. This means that next year the school system will need at least \$20M more from the city or it will have to make cuts.

CAN THE CITY FIND \$20M MORE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION? WILL THE LEGISLATURE ALLOW BOSTON A NEW REVENUE SOURCE? WILL THE STATE ASSUME A GREATER SHARE OF THE COST OF PROGRAMS IT MANDATES? WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE ANSWER TO ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS IS NO? WHAT WILL BE THE BASIS FOR DECIDING WHAT TO CUT?

BPS: Per Pupil Costs 1984-85

\$259.6M

Type of Student:	Regular Ed.	Bilingual	Special Ed.: .1,.2,.3 **	.4 **	.5 & .6 **
Cost of:					
Regular Education	\$1,768.64	\$ 530.59	\$1,275.61	\$ 530.59	AVERAGE TUITION & ADMIN.:
Bilingual or Special Education	\$ 0.00	\$1,707.60	\$1,394.18	\$5,067.22	\$14,690.90
Transportation	\$ 245.68	\$ 245.68	\$ 245.68	\$ 886.90	\$ 1,573.25
Shared Costs *	<u>\$1,877.50</u>	<u>\$1,877.50</u>	<u>\$1,877.50</u>	<u>\$1,877.50</u>	<u>\$ 370.04</u>
TOTAL PER PUPIL	\$3,891.82	\$4,361.37	\$4,792.97	\$8,362.21	\$16,634.19
Number in BPS	38,531	7,017	6,897	3,398	1,017

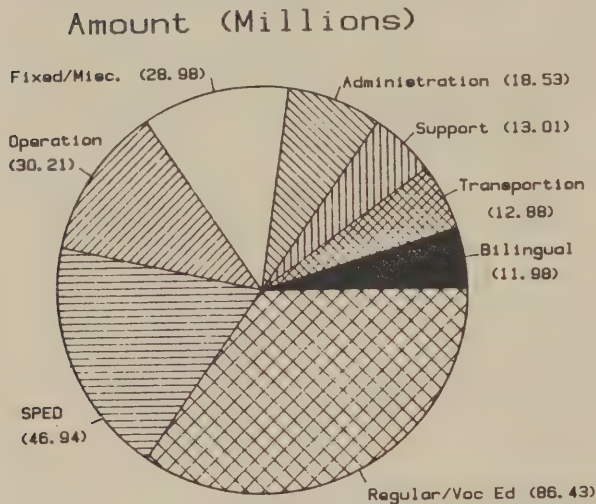
* administration, physical plant, support staff, fixed costs and others

** special ed. numbers refer to degree of student's handicap: .1,.2 and .3 are in regular classrooms some and "resource room" some; .4 in "substantially separate" classroom, mainstreamed for some activities; .5 and .6 in day or residential school outside BPS

To many people it is unclear why Boston's per pupil costs are so high. Besides obvious explanations such as Boston's unusually large number of high schools for the enrollment and somewhat high administrative costs, a partial explanation appears on page 6. Among ten school systems of similar size, Boston has by far the most (37%) students requiring special attention and support. Many students are placed in costly programs because of Boston's lack of remedial programs and past years' large classes. To ignore the needs of these students compounds their difficulties and creates even more costly social problems. Furthermore, even at these high costs, resources to the schools are still inadequate, as shown on pages 3 & 4. Greater budget clarity and better decision making would result if Boston switched to program budgeting, described on page 7.

The BPS Budget: Where It All Goes

FY85 Expenditure by Category



REGULAR EDUCATION/KINDERGARTEN....	\$ 81,933,489.39
teachers, supplies, subs.	
SPECIAL EDUCATION.....	46,936,113.50
teachers, aides, Evaluation	
Team Leaders, trans., tuition	
BILINGUAL EDUCATION.....	11,982,195.75
teachers, aides, supplies	
OPERATION OF PLANT.....	30,207,698.00
heat, repair, custodians	
TRANSPORTATION.....	12,884,747.00
(not including SPED.4,.5,.6)	
SCHOOL BASED ADMINISTRATION.....	17,112,373.80
principals, asst., clerical	
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.....	1,538,569.20
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION.....	9,878,217.25
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION.....	4,491,964.11
teachers, administration	
SUPPORT POSITIONS.....	13,009,622.00
librarians, counselors, coaches	
OTHER COSTS.....	9,623,831.00
CPC, lunch monitors, audio-vis.	
FIXED CHARGE.....	19,359,506.00
insurance, pension, unemploy.	
TOTAL COST.....	\$258,958,327.00
held in reserve.....	644,616.00
GRAND TOTAL.....	\$259,602,943.00

Questions and Answers

★ WHY DID THE BPS END UP WITH APPROXIMATELY \$10 MILLION SURPLUS AT THE END OF THE PAST SCHOOL YEAR?

According to the School Department, there were several main reasons:

- 1.) A budgeted purchase of buses was postponed in favor of continued leasing whose one-year cost is less. In the long run, this will cost the School Department more.
- 2.) Mayor White's \$6 million extra in June, 1983, and Mayor Flynn's "no layoff" guarantee last spring saved the BPS from paying unemployment costs, which were budgeted.
- 3.) Unexpected savings in energy (due to a mild winter) and pension and medical costs freed more funds.
- 4.) Money saved when vacant positions are not filled right away.

The BPS says most of the surplus could not have been anticipated. The Boston Teachers' Union attributes the surplus to "deliberate overbudgeting," claiming that there was also a surplus in FY83 and that \$7 million of that money is still unspent. The School Department denies these charges, while acknowledging that spending was less than the budgeted amount in some areas each year. In addition, past budgets have failed to take into account likely savings, such as unspent salaries while positions are unfilled.

★ WHAT IS THE OUTLOOK FOR BPS FINANCES NEXT SCHOOL YEAR (85-86)?

Very bad at the moment. The BPS will have about \$10 million additional costs, because of union contract agreements and inflation. Meanwhile, this year's \$10M surplus seems unlikely to be available again. Therefore a budget shortfall of at least \$20M is expected.

★ COULD THERE BE A SURPLUS AGAIN NEXT YEAR?

It seems less likely because the 84-85 budget for the first time factors in expected savings in such things as positions that remain vacant or are filled by lower-paid recalls. The budget also plans on recovering from the city about \$2.1M from grants to the school department, previously kept by City Hall for "administration."

★ WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT'S PLANS FOR DEALING WITH THE \$20M SHORTFALL?

According to this year's budget document, "We hope to make up this gap through facilities consolidation, greater economizing, additional city appropriations, and any other sources of potential prior or current year school funds that may be applied."

84-85 Budget: View From the Schools

To find out what this year's budget means for schools, we spoke with 18 principals and headmasters (6 each in elementary, middle and high schools).

Books and Materials

The 1984-85 budget increases by 20% the allotment per student that each school receives for the purchase of books and other materials. In most schools this increase seems to be significant, enabling them to make real progress in building up their supply of books.

How many books is "enough"? Elementary schools need one set per class (or sometimes can share one set per grade) of current, recommended textbooks in all major subjects. High and middle schools need a textbook for every student in every subject taken, so students can take books home. Most schools we called have not yet reached this level.

Some say they do have enough books, or will, with this year's order. Many more said they are moving toward these goals. Some had two or three year plans, for example, this year buying a complete English series plus science for some grades, next year buying math and the other grades' science books, the third year globes and filmstrips, etc. These plans depend on being able to spend for books on the same level for the next few years.

In a number of schools, however, the administrators reported that their stock of books has been so run down that they can't see how to get out of their textbook deficit. Many mentioned that even more book buying is needed because of the demands of the new citywide curriculum goals, and the policy of using the same textbook series in all grades (chosen from a recommended list).

One high school department head explained, "The city has lists of recommended textbooks. But we have to keep making do with what we have. We order 5 or 10 more when we're short. To standardize we need a big, one-time influx of money to get all the same books."

Staff

To many teachers the most important thing about this year's budget is the guarantee of no layoffs. One teacher who has received layoff notices every spring for years said, "I'm starting to plan for next year. I never had that stability before,"

adding that this is very important for morale and school atmosphere.

The budget for this year also provides for more teachers: in some elementary schools, to reduce class size to 28 maximum (estimated average 24); in middle schools, to provide reading and "instructional support" teachers. In high schools, the formula used to determine the number of teachers takes into account the number of students in each school who are working below grade level. The idea is that the high school will have enough staff to provide extra help to those who need it.

Almost all the principals and headmasters said they have enough teachers this year to keep classes at an acceptable size, although two felt their classes are too large. Teachers, however, generally seemed to feel classes should be smaller, even when their own principals were satisfied with class size.

All the high school headmasters we spoke with said they have too few teachers to provide the proper variety of course offerings. One headmaster described both problems: "Reducing class size is a major concern. Smaller classes are especially important in reading, English, language arts and math --- they are still 30 to 35. We hope to reduce the number in reading, and for students who need remediation, but in math the contractual class limit is the class size."

"We are also limited in course offerings. In Social Studies we offer only civics and U.S. history, with two classes in electives. We have no chance to do World Civilization. We can't respond to the call for typing, and can't offer a variety of business courses. We can offer just a core in each discipline."

The elementary school version of this problem is the continuing lack of staff for special subjects like music and physical education. On all levels administrators pointed out that programs funded by Chapter 636 are filling in important gaps, from reading to science to music.

High and middle school administrators said their most serious staffing problem is the lack of teachers for remedial work to help students meet the promotional standards now being implemented. Every high school headmaster said the staffing

continued on p. 5

What Does the Budget Buy?

It buys the education of:
59,469 STUDENTS

6,286 kindergarten
21,559 elementary
13,281 middle school
18,343 high school

the salaries of:
4,349 TEACHERS

2,851 regular education
930 special education
435 bilingual educ.
133 vocational educ.

TRANSPORTATION

\$9,283,000 racial balance
7,739,228 other
\$17,022,228 total

the maintenance of:
127 SCHOOLS

78 elementary
24 middle schools
18 high schools
7 alternative or
special needs

NOTE: Slight discrepancies in figures throughout the newsletter are because information was calculated on different dates, and things like enrollment change constantly.

New or Expanded Programs

Kindergarten

78 schools have Kindergarten II programs, of which
39 are Extended Day (full school day)
This year a Kindergarten I program was added in 65 schools. 60 new teachers hired to teach K I.

Middle School Reorganization

Director of Instruction -- new position added to 20 largest middle schools.
Instructional Support teacher -- new position (at least one) added in all middle schools.

They are responsible for curriculum, supervision and assistance to teachers in meeting citywide curriculum goals and promotional standards.

Middle School Reading

42 certified reading teachers (24 added last year, 18 added this year) to implement these policies:

all 6th and 7th graders reading more than 2 years below grade level guaranteed reading class of 15 or fewer (last year just 6th grade).
all middle school students to take reading with a certified reading teacher.

Computer Education

This is the second year of a three-year computer purchase plan. By the end:
high schools will have enough equipment for each student to meet the 2.5 credit computer education graduation requirement.
middle schools will each have a complete lab (at least 15 computers).
elementary schools will all have some computer equipment (by now 46 of 79 elementary schools have computers).
10 computer instructors were added to the staff this year, to work with classroom teachers on how to use computers.

Physical Education

middle and high school: at least two physical education teachers in each; no change this year.

elementary: 5 physical education specialists added this year, to work with classroom teachers on curriculum and programs. (The original proposal was to have physical education teachers available one day a week in each elementary school, but the cut in the physical education budget request made this impossible.)

Also added this year:

a health coordinator, to develop and help implement health curriculum citywide.
an athletic trainer, to take care of sports injuries and teach school staff prevention and rehabilitation skills.
1 or 2 additional maintenance people for White Stadium.
1 additional secretary for physical education office.

Music

Seven or eight new music teachers are added this year. This will make it possible for all secondary schools to have at least a chorus -- last year half the high schools and 13 of 24 middle schools had no music program.

Several of the new teachers work in elementary schools. Last year most, but not all elementary schools had some music.

Elementary Science

New this year are 5 elementary science specialists to work with classroom teachers in setting up hands-on science projects. About half the elementary schools are to receive science materials kits (cut from original proposal to provide for all elementary schools). No such program recently.

Art

elementary: 17 teachers (10 added this year). Some shared among several schools, others in district Artworks programs, working with classroom teachers on art curriculum. This year's additions mean each district has an Artworks teacher at least half time.

middle school: 19 teachers (4 added this year) are now able to provide every middle school with an art program at least half time.

high school: 29 teachers (no change this year); enough, according to Art Department.

Foreign Languages

middle schools: at least one language offered in "just about all" middle schools, as required by the new BPS curriculum goals. Last year 12 middle schools lacked any foreign language courses.

high schools: same as last year. French and Spanish offered in most high schools; only Spanish at a few, and additional languages at Latin School and Latin Academy.

Jobs Collaborative

14 "Career Experience Teachers" (6 added this year) provide career instruction and counseling and job placement at every non-exam high school as part of the Boston Compact. This year's increase is being funded partly by the BPS and partly by funds provided through the Private Industry Council, co-sponsor of the Jobs Collaborative.

Library

Increases made Jan. 84 continue:

library aides: added to increase library service in 25 schools by one day a week.

All elementary schools have library aides; days per week depends on school size.

media specialist, new position at Campbell Resource Center.

start of software collection (films, filmstrips, records, videotapes) for teachers to borrow or preview for purchase.

This year, in addition, resource books were added to each school library: a National Geographic Atlas, a 1983 World Book Encyclopedia, and a world almanac.

Guidance Counselors

Total of 90 (same as last year)

elementary: only one school with guidance counselor.

middle school: at least one guidance counselor per school (average 362 students to one counselor).

high school: at least one guidance counselor per school (average 400:1).

Bus Monitors

From last year, with no regular program of bus monitors, this year's budget includes \$630,000 for bus safety, which pays for 145 monitors on bus runs chosen by school principals.

School Based Management

This year 9 schools were added to the School Based Management program, bringing the total up to 22. In these schools a School Site Council of parents, teachers, administrators, community members and students does financial and educational planning for the school.

Building Repairs

The amount allocated for repairs and maintenance is about \$4.1 million, up very slightly from last year. However, the city of Boston has agreed that it will spend \$58 million over the next four years on school repair and building:

\$38 million to build a new Boston Latin

Academy and repair Boston Latin School

\$3 million for upgrading White Stadium

\$17 million for repairs at other schools.

However, the city is depending for these plans on a 90% school facilities reimbursement from the state, which in turn depends on continuing appropriations by the legislature.

The city school facilities plan was a product of negotiations between the School Department and City Hall over next year's school budget. Supt. Spillane's original \$264M budget proposal had included \$2M for facilities repair and \$4M for athletic facilities renovation.

View From the Schools

continued from p. 3

formula is unrealistic and in practice will not provide resources for adequate remedial programs.

Building Conditions

Only two of the administrators we spoke with said their buildings were in good condition, although several more had just one or two specific problems. Many said some repairs were made last year, but the list of repairs not yet scheduled included major structural problems (like leaking roofs) as well as the strongly felt need for new paint: "If 'Gloria loves Bob' was written in 1972 it's still here today!" "I believe in the importance of aesthetics. It helps a kid function, gives kids pride."

Public School Costs: Boston and Nine Similar Cities

City	Population 1980 (a)	Public School Enrollment 1983-84 (d)	"Limited English Proficiency" (LEP) 1980 (b)	In Special Needs Programs 1980 (b)	"LEP" or Special Needs
Atlanta	425,022	67,317	.4%	8.3%	8.7%
Boston	562,994	55,470	19.1%	18.1%	37.2%
Columbus	565,000	69,417*	.1%	10.8%	10.9%
Cleveland	573,822	77,377*	1.3%	10.5%	11.8%
Denver	491,396	61,120	4.3%	7.1%	11.4%
Nashville	455,651	66,334*	.7%	7.4%	8.1%
Pittsburgh	423,938	41,269	.3%	11.9%	12.2%
St. Louis	453,085	56,400	.1%	15.7%	15.8%
Seattle	493,846	42,438	6.7%	7.2%	13.9%
San Francisco	678,974	62,081	20.7%	3.7%	24.4%

City	Average teacher salary 1983-84 (d)	Teacher/ student ratio 1982-83 (c)	Per pupil cost 1983-84 (d)	Source of School Funds: (c)		
				% local	% state	% federal
Atlanta	\$22,728	19:1	\$2,766	50%	35%	15%
Boston	28,500 *	16:1**	4,141	50%	41% ++	9% **
Columbus	---	19:1	3,421*	50%	42%	8%
Cleveland	---	22:1	4,019*	38%	53%	9%
Denver	25,747	16:1	3,673	68%	25%	6%
Nashville	---	21:1	2,185*	63%	30%	7%
Pittsburgh	27,642	14:1	5,239	55%	34%	11%
St. Louis	23,255	19:1	2,667	42%	46%	12%
Seattle	25,180	--	3,992	23%	71%	6%
San Francisco	---	22:1	2,556	15%	76%	9%

SOURCES: (a) Census: Council of Great City Schools (CGCS); (b) US Dept of Ed/CGCS; (c) calculated from CGCS info; Boston information from BPS FY84 Budget; (d) Educational Research Service. * 1982-83, CGCS (83-84 not avail.) **BPS FY84 budget

++THIS IS NOT 41% OF THE \$259 MILLION REGULAR OPERATING BUDGET. THESE FIGURES ARE BASED ON A TOTAL WHICH INCLUDES THE OPERATING BUDGET PLUS ALL EXTERNAL GRANTS.

How Do Boston's Costs Compare?

This chart compares Boston with nine cities of similar size and public school enrollment. Comparisons help put BPS costs into perspective.

From the chart we can see that Boston's per pupil cost, while high, is similar to costs in many comparable cities -- a more meaningful comparison than state or national averages.

Compared to these other cities, Boston is about average in the amount of state aid it receives; according to the National Education Association, Massachusetts ranks 37th in the percentage of public school costs borne by the state.

The chart shows some areas in which Boston's costs are high compared to other cities. Teacher salaries and the number of teachers per student are both relatively high. Boston has the highest percentage of students in special needs programs and an unusually high percentage of students with "limited English proficiency". Both groups require extra resources and more teachers per student; together they make up well over a third of BPS enrollment, by far the highest of any of these cities. (Not all the "LEP" students are in bilingual programs. Bilingual programs include about 11.5% of BPS students. Even using this figure, however, bilingual plus special needs students are over 30% of the total in Boston public schools).

The BPS Budget: How Decisions Are Made

Ultimately the Boston School Committee approves the BPS budget, but before they do there are many steps. Each year, the schools have a statutory minimum of money the city must give them, although often the city gives more. The School Department usually builds a budget on what they think they need rather than what they think they'll get.

The Budget Department at 26 Court St. initiates the process by drafting a proposal based on:

- 1) minimum staffing and program needs, according to enrollment and bargaining agreements
- 2) advice from principals and district superintendents
- 3) current expenditures.

Since there is not yet a program and evaluation unit, there is no way to judge programs, and thus all are usually funded year after year unless there is a budget crisis.

Choices made among possible new programs or additions to old ones come in various ways: from the Superintendent, the School Committee, and intense lobbying by parents and department heads.

Once the budget is finally developed, it is presented to the School Committee for review. The School Committee sometimes cuts out or changes line items or checks to see that specific directives, such as reducing administrative overhead, have been followed. Then the School Committee approves the budget.

Program Budgeting: Important Tool For School Policy Making

Public resources are always limited. Therefore it is essential that school committees, with the advice of the public and the superintendent, make the most careful and explicit allocation of resources among the many programs of the school system.

In developing a budget in a rational manner, it is essential to know how much is being allocated to each program and exactly what kind of program will result. For example, will physics and chemistry be taught in all high schools? Will advanced placement English, elementary remedial reading, an adequate level of counseling, and full day kindergarten be available?

In order to consider clear policy choices about these and many, many other questions, it is important that the financial categories "fit" the institution's programs---this is what is meant by a program budget. Then everyone can understand how much will be invested in each program, and what the resulting program will be.

It should also be noted that both drawing up and executing the budget must be done by program within organizational units (schools and offices). Administrators put together a program budget for each of their schools. At the central office, these budgets are added together by computer so that there is, for example, one program budget for all kindergartens. Once the program budget is approved by the superintendent and committee, it is broken down again by school and office for pur-

poses of execution and spending control.

Once the budget is adopted, the superintendent, the committee and the public need feedback about what really happened to plan programs and budgets. They need program accounting, reporting, and evaluation.

Research on communities that have tried program budgeting indicates that it often increases controversy and sometimes makes arriving at decisions more difficult. The reason for this is clear. More people understand what is going on.

At the same time, given a competent administration and a sincere and dedicated school committee, improvements are more likely, since debate on a program budget helps people understand the problems and opportunities more clearly.

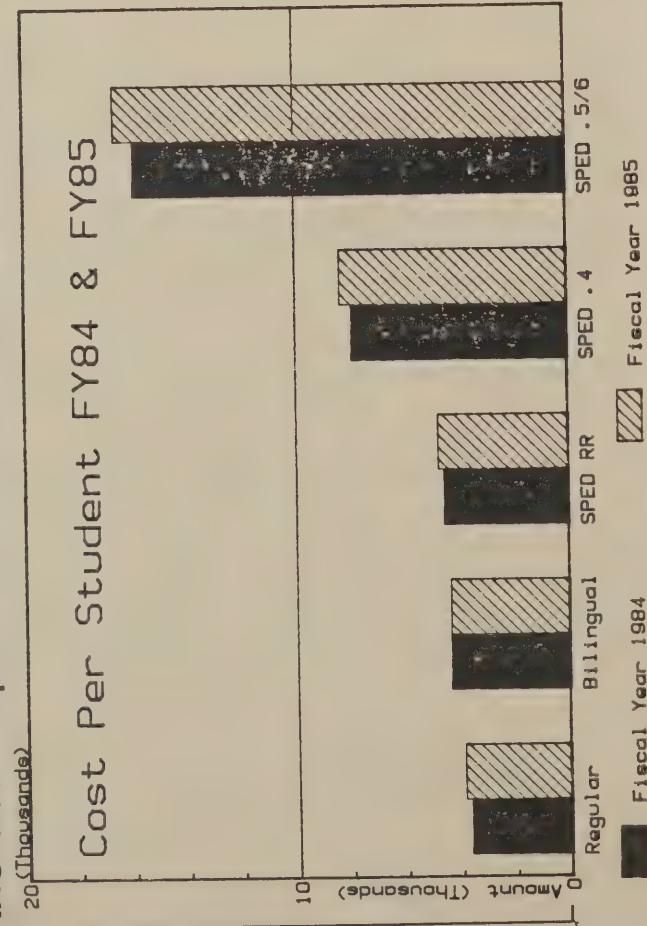
Are program budgets good for public schools? If you believe that greater public understanding and greater institutional accountability will lead to greater public support and better performance, the answer is yes. I share that belief.

---Oliver S. Brown, Asst. Superintendent, Cambridge Public Schools, and teacher at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.



CWEC especially thanks Michael Fung, CWEC Board member and Taft Middle School principal, who produced all the statistics for this newsletter.

Inside: Report On Boston Public School Budget



Per Pupil Cost: What Do the Numbers Mean?

Dividing this year's BPS budget by enrollment, you get: $\$259,590,000 \div 56,860 \text{ students} = \$4,565 \text{ per pupil}$. But if you break this into type of student, you get a clearer picture:

Number of students	Approximate cost per student
38,531 regular ed.....	\$ 3,892
7,017 bilingual.....	4,361
6,897 special ed.(.1,.2,.3) ..	4,793
3,398 special ed.(.4).....	8,362
1,017 special ed.(.5 & .6) ..	16,634 *

* day or residential students at schools outside BPS
more on per pupil cost inside

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INSIDE: 1984-85 BPS Budget:
CWEC's Annual Analysis

GOOD READERS IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS: What Their Parents and Teachers Say

► CAN SCHOOLS REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HOW WELL STUDENTS ACHIEVE? Or is family status (income, education) the thing that really determines how well students will do in school?

These questions have been debated actively since the sixties, when James Coleman and Christopher Jencks each authored a major study showing that students from well-to-do families were more likely to achieve school -- and later, financial -- success than students from low income families -- regardless of how much was spent on the students' schools.

When these studies appeared, many people jumped to the conclusion that it doesn't matter what schools do. Soon, however, other researchers, especially Ronald Edmonds, launched a counter-trend in educational thinking, which became known as the "effective schools" movement. They showed that particular schools were indeed quite successful in helping students of all backgrounds learn, and drew the conclusion that schools can and must find ways to teach all children.

► IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE DEBATES, many people consciously or unconsciously assume that in an urban school system like Boston's, students' families do not contribute positively to their achievement in school -- because the parents do not have a great deal of money or education, are members of minority groups, some of whom speak languages other than English, and are often single parents.

Thousands of Boston public school students from such families, however, are doing well, earning high classroom grades and achievement test scores.

► THIS SPRING, CWEC AND A GROUP OF WHELOCK COLLEGE GRADUATE STUDENTS worked together on a project of interviewing parents of successful Boston public school students to see what these parents could tell us about the students' families and other experiences that may have contributed to their success in school. These parents for the most part lacked the educational and economic privilege usually associated with school success.

It was clear from interviews with these parents (and some of their children's teachers) that the parents do play an important role in supporting their children's success in school.

Of course, many parents provide this kind of support and their children are not doing exceptionally well. A student's school performance also depends on the school, the student, and other factors. Still, our interviews seem to support the conviction that led us to begin this project -- that family support is important to a child's success in school.

► PARENTS, HOWEVER, DO NOT NECESSARILY REALIZE how valuable they can be as partners in their children's education. For many people, going to school to talk to the teacher is something you do because your child has such poor grades, or has done something wrong. One parent, asked whether she thought her child's school was a good school, replied, "He's never been in any trouble there." More than once, parents of successful students have been told by teachers, "I don't need to see you; your child is doing fine."

► SCHOOLS COULD HELP STRENGTHEN SUPPORT FOR THEIR STUDENTS' PROGRESS by building a more positive, active cooperation with parents. The Boston public schools already include many small examples of active outreach: a principal who calls parents when their children are absent; a teacher who sends home letters asking parents to have children read aloud to them, if the children are reading below grade level; a school that holds a "demonstration day" on which parents come and observe their children's classes.

We hope this newsletter will contribute to efforts to strengthen this kind of positive cooperation between schools and families. (See p. 7 for some suggestions.)

The Parents of These Good Readers: Some Background

We interviewed 29 parents of third to fifth graders who scored in the top 10% on last October's Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test (see p. 7 for details).

The children are mostly between 9 and 11 and, according to their parents, they all like school. Most read on their own at home. At least five of the children are or have been in Chapter 1 remedial reading -- several got off to a slow start in the first few grades. However, almost all are now doing very well in school, academically and socially.

The families represent a range of ethnic groups: 8 black, 11 white, 5 Hispanic, 1 Asian, and 2 Cape Verdean. 11 speak a language other than English. Slightly over half are two-parent families; some single parents live with other family members. Most families have between 3 and 5 children.

Jobs: Some of the mothers are at home, some on welfare. Mothers' jobs outside the home include seamstress, cashier, nurses aide, secretary, fish packer, office manager, and others. Fathers' jobs include construction work, cook, firefighter, custodian, factory worker, auditor, quality control and others.

Parents' education: Almost two fifths of the mothers and one third of the fathers left school before finishing high school. One fifth of the mothers and two fifths of the fathers had some education beyond high school. However, none of the mothers and only two of the fathers graduated from four year colleges.

Parents as readers: There is a wide range of reading habits and feelings about reading among the people we interviewed.

One woman who did read aloud to her children when they were little says she doesn't any more because "I don't like to read aloud. I stumble and make mistakes. I'm not intelligent."

Another mother says she reads seldom: "Mostly the Sunday paper. But my older son and daughter read books." One mother said, "I hate reading!" -- but she is attending college and the children see her studying. One mother reads only the Bible.

On the other hand, most mothers we spoke with, and some fathers, enjoy reading, read for pleasure, and feel that is an important reason why their children are good readers. The mothers said they read mostly novels, but some read nonfiction, like the mother

who said, "Right now I'm reading medical books so I can figure out them." Others said:

"My family, we're really into reading. We have books all over the place. This kid has been brought up with books."

"I read all the time. Everyone in the family does except my husband -- he doesn't have time. If I'm reading a newspaper and I see something I think he would be interested in I say, 'Here, read this.' When his brother brought in the papers last Sunday he left a note on top: 'Sean, see p. 25.'"

Several mothers mentioned that their own mothers had brought them up to love books

On the other hand several said they are trying to give their children an educational advantage they never had:

"Because if my mother had done that for me I never would have dropped out of school. A lot of things I wish my mother had done for me when I was growing up, she just didn't have the time to do."

A Word of Caution: When we first contacted parents, most said they had done nothing special to contribute to their children's success in reading. During the interviews, however, most had interesting observations and ideas.

Some parents, however, insisted that they really had no idea why their children were good readers. These were usually parents who had other children reading less well, or even quite poorly. "It's just the individual," said one of these mothers. "I've sat down with them all the same, done nothing different with any of them."

These parents' caution is an important reminder that a child's approach to learning is complicated. Our survey does not provide a scientific proof of the causes of good reading, nor a recipe for producing good readers.

It does demonstrate the important ways parents can and do support their children's education. We hope it will encourage schools, citizen's groups -- and parents themselves -- to see parents in a new way, as important partners in their children's schooling.

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Involving Parents in Schools: Some Ideas

► Principal-sponsored informal "coffee hour" discussions of ways parents can help their children succeed in school, led by active parents from the school, scheduled at times convenient for parents.

► "Meet the teacher" sessions for classroom parents, held early in the school year, where the teacher can explain the year's curriculum and philosophy, answer questions, and give suggestions to parents for supporting classroom learning.

► Individual conversations between a teacher and the parents of each student in the class, held early in the school year, to exchange information about the child and establish a basis for communication throughout the year.

► School and parent sponsored "T.V. Diet Weeks" in which all the children in the school limit their "intake" of T.V.

► Principal or teacher phone calls to parents of students absent more than one or two days.

► "Demonstration days" or other occasions when parents are invited to observe classes

► Discussions involving school staff and active parents, to plan ways of involving parents, appropriate to that school.

► School Department/CPC seek out and disseminate positive examples of parent outreach already occurring in Boston public schools.

Interviewing Parents: How the Project Was Conducted

CWEC staff and a group of Wheelock College graduate students prepared a questionnaire and interviewed the parents of 29 children selected at random from a list of over 700 third-to-fifth graders who scored in the top 10% (by national standards) on the October, 1983 Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test. Mr. Hakim Yessayin of the Boston Public School Department of Implementation very generously did the computer work necessary to provide us with the list.

The Wheelock students who participated in the project are: Deborah Holmes, Emily Quigley, Kitty Hughes, Amy Rugel, Mary Frampton, Enid Paul, Laurel Waiksnoris, Cheryl Burgess, Mikey Walker and Susan Fourchielli, working with their professor, Dr. Florence Rossman. Karen Worth, Coordinator of External Programs at Wheelock College, helped bring the students and CWEC together for this project and provided ongoing assistance.

Reading Aloud: A New School Volunteers Program

This spring, through the new School Volunteers Reading Aloud program, guest readers, branch librarians, students and teachers have begun reading aloud to students in a number of Boston public schools.

The program, initiated by CWEC and carried out by School Volunteers with the cooperation of the School Department, aims to promote greater awareness of the importance of reading aloud to young children as a basis for the development of skill and interest in reading, says Linda McGregor of School Volunteers. The Reading Aloud program, she says, also encourages reading to older children as a way to stimulate their interest in books

A number of Reading Aloud series have focused on themes, such as multicultural education or Earth Day. In addition, the

Reading Aloud program has sponsored a storytelling training program at the Trotter and a local access cable TV show called Book Raps, in which a panel of students talk about books they have read. And in two schools, the Blackstone and the Quincy, the Reading Aloud program organized Book Fairs, featuring guest readers and low-cost books in Spanish, Chinese and English.

The other major activity of the Reading Aloud program is holding workshops for parents on how to help their children with reading.

Funding for the Reading Aloud program has come from the Dennison Foundation, Inc., the Boston Globe Foundation, Houghton Mifflin and the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust.

**COMING: Next Year's BPS Budget:
CWEC's Annual Analysis**

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**INSIDE: Good Readers in the BPS:
What Their Parents
and Teachers Say**

\$30M in outside grants: Where does it go?

This year Boston public schools received more than \$30 million in federal, state and private grants, outside of the regular BPS budget. Some of this money is for school lunches (\$8 million) and other non-educational items, but almost \$19 million goes to special programs in the schools. This money cannot be used for basic expenses like classroom teachers' salaries, maintenance, or supplies. The grants are made to supplement, not fund, the schools' basic operations.

There is a widespread conviction that these dollars aren't doing the students enough good and if better used they could meet most of the system's remedial needs, which will be so obvious once promotional standards are begun. As with most issues connected to the BPS, things are not that simple, but it is certainly time to take a look at how external funds could be better utilized.

The approach should not be piecemeal. Planning for the use of this money should be done in the context of the larger BPS budget process.

For example, proposals for concentrating Chapter 636 (state desegregation) funds in one or two areas will raise questions about what will happen to other programs currently funded by 636. Will they be dropped? Will other funding be found? Similarly, if changes are made in the Chapter 1 program, they should be related to the system's overall strategy for teaching basic skills. Overall planning is necessary to direct externally funded programs toward school system goals.

To aid in the discussion of how these resources can best be used, we've compiled information on the amounts, sources and current uses of these grants (see chart, p. 2). From interviews with 35 administrators, teachers and parents, we identified benefits and problems of the two largest externally funded programs: Chapter 1 (formerly Title 1), a remedial program in basic skills, and Chapter 636, a program of state grants to school systems with desegregation plans.

Changes ahead?

For Chapter 636, the BPS is considering concentrating the funds on one or two priority goals, such as remedial reading. Individual schools' and districts' proposals would have to meet this goal. This would conflict with many parents and administrators who value the current freedom to use 636 funds at the discretion of the school.

Meanwhile, the State Department of Education has issued its own list of "target areas" for Boston's 636 programs, including specific desegregation measures such as white recruitment at a list of specified schools and support for minority students at exam schools. They also include measures to improve 636 operations.

Most of those currently involved feel it's important to continue using 636 money for programs in such areas as arts, science, and gifted and talented programs. Parents speak with feeling about 636 programs as important enrichment, "addressing the human condition in schools rather than productivity." On the other hand, some are equally emphatic about cutting down on "fluff" and focusing on priorities such as basic skills and racial equity.

For Chapter 1, the key question is whether Chapter 1 teachers could or should be integrated more closely with classroom work. While many Chapter 1 teachers say their current methods are best, most other teachers and administrators are frustrated with the current "pullout" system: students

cont. on p.3

Grants to the Boston Public Schools

PROGRAM	CHAPTER 1	TITLE 7	TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT	VOCATIONAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION GRANTS
SOURCE OF FUNDS	federal, administered by state	federal	Permanent Charities	federal, administered by state
AMOUNT	\$10,838,444	\$599,916	\$149,000 (second year of two-year grant)	voc. ed. \$1,154,301 special ed. \$3,000,000
DESCRIPTION	small group individualized instruction in basic skills -- mostly reading, some math and English as a Second Language; in several schools, reading labs; in two, computerized diagnosis and programming; serves approximately 10,000 BPS students	grants to assist bilingual education with inservice training and materials: Project Success, for Southeast Asian and Haitian programs and Project Child, for Hispanic, Italian, Greek & Cape Verdean programs	provides training, consultation and technical assistance to the School Improvement Project through Greater Boston Educational Collaborative	special education grants fund particular projects for special needs students vocational education grant funds 21 new projects in emerging fields for vocational or comprehensive business students
PROGRAM	CHAPTER 636	EDUCATION BLOCK GRANT	COMMONWEALTH INSERVICE	CORPORATE DONORS
SOURCE	state	federal	state	Ford: \$20,000 Polaroid: \$1,000 Exxon: \$13,000 Berzon: \$500
AMOUNT	\$5,400,000	\$1,000,000	\$24,000	
DESCRIPTION	grants to districts to fund wide variety of programs to improve the quality of desegregated education. At least 40% of each district grant goes to collaborative institutions -- universities and cultural organizations -- for programs in schools. grants also to central BPS administration for citywide programs	allocated among: Institute for Professional Development: \$183,450 middle school coordinators \$316,000 alternative programs: \$125,000 testing: \$113,000 computer education: \$73,500 secondary curriculum: \$50,650 reading, Brighton High: \$33,150	fifteen small grants (\$3,000 or less) to pay salaries of workshop leaders for inservice training for teachers; teachers write proposals for these funds.	Ford: "exemplary high school" grant to South Boston High Polaroid: grant to the Boston Cities Project (BPS students travel to "sister cities") Exxon: grant to the Institute for Professional Development for "Impact II" grants to teachers for sharing successful programs. Berzon: grant to Adult Education Department

OUR PHONATHON TO DATE HAS RAISED \$1277 IN PLEDGES.

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CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

The Basics: Chapter 1

a federal program administered through the state (formerly Title 1) providing funds for "educationally disadvantaged" students who live in low-income areas.

program: teachers and aides provide small group remedial help, mostly in reading, some in math and English as a Second Language.

Boston's 1983-84 grant: \$12,054,000
for Boston public schools: \$10,838,444

for parochial schools: \$1,216,152

staff: 277 teachers, 126 aides, 15 administrators, 8 clericals, 3 outreach workers.

students: 12,180 Boston total
10,269 in 87 Boston public schools
1,911 in 33 Boston parochial schools

eligibility:
schools that draw students from low-income neighborhoods. In citywide schools Chapter 1 students must live in eligible neighborhoods.
students who score in the lower 2/5 (40th percentile) on the Metropolitan Achievement Test. Those in most need of academic help are selected.

restrictions: Chapter 1 can't "supplant" (replace) the student's regular reading program, and Chapter 1 teachers may not work with non-Chapter 1 students.

Changes ahead? — cont. from p. 1

leaving their classrooms to work with Chapter 1 teachers in small groups.

In a two-year pilot program Chapter 1 teachers in 10 elementary schools have taught their groups in a corner of the regular classroom. This seems to add little benefit and to create problems of noise and distraction.

Some advocate more far-reaching change: replacing pullout with a plan for using Chapter 1 teachers in the regular program.

Chapter 636

a state program providing funds to improve the quality of integrated education in school districts with desegregation plans.

Boston's 1983-84 grant: \$5.4 million

programs in a wide range of areas including basic skills, arts, computer education, counseling, parent outreach, curriculum development, teacher training, school planning and more.

teachers: 636 pays for 13 full time and 25 to 30 part time teachers in Boston.

proposals sent from each district and the central administration must be approved by the state Board of Education. May cover one or several schools, a whole district, or the whole system.

outside institutions like universities and cultural organizations which form "pairing" partnerships with a school or district receive at least 40% of a district's 636 funds for collaborative programs

evaluation is done through site visits by evaluators from the Boston public schools and the state Department of Education, as well as written reports from project administrators.

Next year 636 programs in districts will probably change little, since they are in the third year of a 3-year funding cycle. The central grant will include \$240,000 for teacher training through the Institute for Professional Development, and additional funds for the Secondary Schools project, with small cuts in other areas.

Other states do use Chapter 1 funds to contribute to classroom teaching, but Mass. Chapter 1 Director Jack Baptista feels this would create problems: it would be hard to prove Chapter 1 teachers were helping only Chapter 1 students, or that they weren't being used to replace their students' regular reading program.

We hope this discussion of these two programs will encourage a comprehensive look at the ways externally funded programs can be used as part of a strategy for improving Boston's public schools.

Chapter 636: The Issues

Parents' attitude: Most of those interviewed were enthusiastic about 636 programs in general:

"Parents are attracted to public schools by these 'extras' -- they fill the gap left by the cutbacks."

"I feel pretty positive because without 636 kids don't get this kind of enrichment in schools."

"I'm very pleased with 636 because each school can write proposals for what it feels is necessary."

Most also had examples of programs they thought were useless or poorly designed, and many had criticisms of 636 procedures and priorities. Overall, however, the 636 programs seem to be seen as a definite plus for the Boston public schools.

Integration: Interpretations of the 636 law vary. Some feel the main goal of 636 should be to foster integration through programs explicitly aimed at interracial understanding, reducing racial differences in achievement, etc. Others say any improvement in the quality of education helps desegregation by attracting and keeping students of all races, and improving school atmosphere.

Some programs are seen as making improvements in interracial understanding through involving children in common projects. Others are felt to be too superficial to have meaning, such as joint field trips with suburban schools, or passive attendance at a performance.

Equity: Each of the eight geographic districts gets a roughly similar amount of 636 money per student; Dist 9 gets about 1½ times that, to support its magnet programs. Districts allocate money among their schools; some schools get none. The District Superintendents have a major say about the allocation.

Hasty planning/delayed programs: Proposal writing begins in January and must be approved by June for fall start-up. It can take up to 3 months for the city to hire staff; contract approval is also slow. Delays in hiring staff, and in some cases delays in city approval of contracts, prevent some projects from starting until November, December or even later.

Administration: It is difficult to tell how much 636 money goes to administration because there is no consistency among districts in what is included in the term "administration."

"We could track down every penny spent for administration," says 636 administrator Catherine Blount, "but it would be a massive undertaking."

The 1983 Boston 636 report shows 7% of funds spent on administration. The 1982 state report on Boston 636 shows about 15%.

Direct service to students: The state Department of Education report estimates that 50% of 636 money in Boston goes to working directly with children and another 13% to "indirect services" such as teacher training.

Repeating good programs/coordinating with school program: Occasionally 636 programs become part of the school's regular curriculum. The overwhelming majority, however, simply end. Others continue to receive 636 funds year after year.

There is no built-in method for spreading the word of successful programs to other schools. The state pointed to this problem in its 1983 report and directed evaluators to identify programs that should be repeated in other schools. So far, however, no mechanism has been set up to do this.

Several people expressed frustration that most 636 programs are not coordinated with the school's regular program, and consultation with classroom teachers is not considered part of the project.

Evaluation: There is near-unanimous agreement that 636 evaluation is weak. With 240 separate programs, says Martin Hunt, "there is no way to effectively look" at all of them. Court St. evaluators usually make only one visit to each program.

Most Boston 636 evaluation has been internal. Even when outside evaluators came in, there has been a history of uncritical, favorable evaluations. The evaluations have been "what is known as constructive criticism," said one principal sarcastically -- aimed at helping programs improve, not aimed at helping decision-makers weed out weak programs or select strong ones.

Finally, 636 evaluations have no "teeth"; no program has ever been discontinued because of a poor evaluation.

Teacher overtime: Teachers now receive a set stipend, not hourly pay, for 636 projects. No principals get overtime pay. This year \$164,362 (2+ %) went to teacher overtime.

Parent influence: Parents must sign off on all school 636 proposals, but in most cases this seems to be a meaningless formality. A few parents do feel they have initiated and monitored 636 programs.

Parents sit on district proposal planning boards. Their perceptions about their influence varies from district to district. Some feel they have a great deal, some that they have absolutely none.

Even in districts where parents feel least powerful, parent objections have forced changes in some programs. On other occasions, however, programs have been funded over parent objections. Some parents say they feel planning boards are stacked with administrators and university people who tend to support each other against parent objections.

Elements of a good program:

Those with experience in 636 listed:

- * Kids are active participants, not a passive audience (such as a middle school science project in which kids made beer, steam and perfume)
- * Involvement is ongoing, not one-shot or occasional experiences (field trips)
- * Program is related to curriculum goals (for example, a poet-in-residence coordinating work with the language arts curriculum)
- * Planning is realistic (for example, a program that places only one computer in each school was criticized)

Elements of a weak program:

- * Poor planning (such as field trips with long waits and bus rides, passive viewing of exhibits)
- * Spending large amounts of money on few students (such as a \$15,000 program for 15 to 20 artistically talented kids)
- * Programs that attract participants of only one race
- * Production of curriculum materials that ignore teachers' knowledge or are of poor quality
- * Programs that fail to involve students and depend too much on staff (such as professional publication of collections of student writing or drawing)

Unspent money: Last year Boston returned under \$200,000 (3½%), down from 13% the previous year. Director Martin Hunt attributes the improved performance to tighter controls made possible by less decentralized administration. No matter how tight the controls or how good the planning, however, some money will always be returned unless there are some changes in: the timetable; the state rule that unspent funds can never be carried over, even for a month; and the very strict state regulations on transferring funds.

Pairings with colleges and cultural institutions: Districts are directed to spend at least 40% of their 636 grant through collaboratives like universities and cultural institutions. Their charges for overhead (8% -- lower than in most grants) seem high to many parents. Some parents also object to money going for university staff to administer 636 programs; universities argue that staff is needed to hook up university resources to the schools. They argue that 636 programs cost the university more than it receives.

The university's role varies greatly depending on the university and the district. In most cases schools seem to get some benefit, even though sometimes it is not the kind they feel they need most.

Some universities/colleges are praised highly by parents and school people for providing help in many ways, not just paid services, and responding to schools' needs. Others are seen as willing to provide services for a fee, but not genuinely cooperating with the district. Still others are seen as inappropriately dominating district 636 planning.

Conflict with pairing institutions arises mainly when school district people feel the university is designing programs to meet its own needs for research, student placement and staff salaries, rather than responding to schools' definitions of their own needs.

Some examples: sending students to work with BPS children without adequate supervision; pushing for programs to be administered through them so they can hire staff; producing curriculum packages that teachers will not use.

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Chapter 1: The Issues

Benefits:

- adds over 200 teachers and almost 100 aides teaching basic skills in the Boston public schools
- provides the only reading teachers there are in high schools
- designs individual learning plans based on each student's strengths and weaknesses
- provides supportive atmosphere and immediate feedback for its students
- supplies textbooks, materials and ongoing inservice training for teachers

Selection: While this works well in some schools, teachers in some high schools feel students are inappropriately assigned to Chapter 1 for administrative convenience. Some schools with largely low-income students are excluded from Chapter 1 because decisions are based on all the school age children in the neighborhood even though many may not attend public school.

In citywide magnet schools, students can be in Chapter 1 only if they live in eligible neighborhoods. This leads to many situations where the student needs help and is from a low-income family, but is denied Chapter 1 because his neighborhood isn't poor enough. Some students in this situation were ordered to leave Madison Park's Chapter 1 program this year.

Role in schools: In some schools Chapter 1 teachers are well integrated into the staff. In many schools, however, there are sources of tension between Chapter 1 and other teachers. Other teachers often see Chapter 1 teaching as an easy job. Until recently Chapter 1 teachers were exempt from administrative duties like yard and cafeteria monitoring. Even now they have fewer of these duties and this can cause resentment.

Scheduling: Many elementary teachers find it difficult to plan the day when groups of students keep leaving for Chapter 1. Chapter 1 requires that they may not miss their regular reading period, which means they often miss another subject, hurting their progress in that area. In addition, many teachers find it disruptive to have students coming and going.

Coordination with regular program:

Curriculum: The Chapter 1 program says it develops its goals to complement BPS curriculum objectives.

Materials: Chapter 1 selects and buys textbooks for its classes. Except in Grade One, these are different books from those used in classrooms. Some people feel working with two different textbooks is confusing for students.

Using different texts is not a state requirement. Some Massachusetts communities use the same textbooks in Chapter 1 and in the classroom.

Communication: There is no established procedure for Chapter 1 and classroom teachers to talk about students' needs and programs. The lack of planning time in elementary schools makes working together difficult. In some schools teachers do talk with each other about their students. In others this communication is rare.

Results:

Achievement scores go up when students participate in Chapter 1. On the average, their progress slows or stops when they leave. Chapter 1 administrators say these results show the program's effectiveness. Critics say students' failure to maintain progress raises questions about Chapter 1's long term effect.

Gains in scores do not usually bring students up to grade level. The program's informal goal is one month's progress for every month in the program, a goal some feel is too modest.

Teachers say they see positive changes in many Chapter 1 students. Some are more enthusiastic than others, but all agree Chapter 1 helps some students and not others.

Students who are not drastically behind their grade tend to make the most progress in Chapter 1.

High school Chapter 1 programs were criticized for ineffectiveness by an outside evaluator several years ago. One high school teacher comments, "Some kids learn from what we offer and some don't. By high school, kids have been taught repeatedly in a way that has failed for them. They need something drastically different."

Partnership Alliance

How could the school system make sure that external organizations who work with its schools are coordinating their efforts and directing them towards system priorities?

To answer that question and to concentrate outside resources as much as possible, Dr. Robert Spillane created the PARTNERSHIP ALLIANCE three years ago. A 19 member group including BPS Deputies and senior staff, the PA meets once a month to think and talk about how they can more effectively help students in Boston's schools. The group is currently chaired by Betsy Nelson, School Volunteers, and Robert Hayden, Superintendent's office. The PA itself does not run programs in schools, though many of its member organizations do, nor does it receive any funding for its coordinating efforts, although several members of the PA do receive 636 grants for their activities.

An example of its work perhaps best explains the group. Last year, after a meeting with Dr. Lancaster, the teaching of science emerged as a major priority and need. Out of these discussions grew a PA sponsored symposium at the Museum of Science at which colleges and universities and science-related institutions examined different methods for teaching science and specifically, how external science resources could be tied into teaching Boston's science objectives. Currently, twelve institutions are now working on a training proposal to help ready Boston's teachers for full scale implementation next year.

This example is precisely the kind of tight organizing and focusing the PA hopes to encourage.

Boston Plan for Excellence

To commemorate its 200th birthday, the Bank of Boston has set up an endowment fund of \$1.5 million which will generate at least \$150,000 each year for Boston's schools. The main purpose of the fund will be to aid projects developed by principals and teachers at the school level. Grants up to \$10,000 will be made, beginning next September. For more information call 726-6200, ext.5658 after mid-May.

Recommendations

CHAPTER 636

1. Revise yearly schedule to allow an earlier start and more time for proposal writing, to approve proposals in time for September start-up, to streamline Boston's process for approving contracts and staff appointments.
2. Allow more flexibility in the use of funds, such as shifting money from one program to another if necessary and carrying over money to the next year.
3. Strengthen evaluation, with a clear mandate and power to identify strong programs and discontinue others.
4. Spread good programs by making them known to other schools or including them as part of the regular school program.
5. Conduct a comprehensive review of university pairings.

CHAPTER 1

1. End pullout -- integrate Chapter 1 teachers into the regular program -- or at least:
2. Establish regular conferences for Chapter 1 and classroom teachers to discuss plans for students with whom they both work.
3. Use the same textbooks for Chapter 1 and classroom reading programs.
4. Explore eligibility rules to find ways to make them more flexible and realistic.

OVERALL

Develop a comprehensive plan for use of externally funded programs to further BPS goals. In developing the plan, provide opportunities for teachers, parents and administrators with experience in these programs to contribute their views.

Boston Business Contributions

Local foundations and corporations give in other ways, too. This year they have contributed \$2,209,600 to 12 independent external organizations like School Volunteers and CWEC who work with the BPS.

**COMING: Good Readers in the BPS:
What Their Parents
and Teachers Say**

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**INSIDE: \$30M in Grants
to the BPS:
Where Does It Go?**



PROMOTIONAL STANDARDS: getting better or just getting tough?

In November, the School Committee adopted by unanimous vote a policy that sets standards for students to meet for promotion or graduation. The policy includes a rationale and requires explicitly that students who fall behind be especially helped. The intent clearly is to get tough, but it is also to get better at the same time.

If the standards solve, or even partially solve, some serious systemwide problems---persistent low achievement, graduates whose skills fall short, and a general lack of accountability---then everyone in town will welcome them. The danger, though, is that the get tough section of the policy will be implemented, but not the get better. Should that happen, students will suffer.

The language in the policy makes very clear that individual students should not suffer because the rules have changed after the game was started. When they voted for the policy, the School Committee added that next year's budget should show how the needed resources were to be provided. But outside critics worry that the schools won't be ready next year, especially the high schools. The number of students who need extra help is extremely high, but the extra help currently available is extremely limited. A strong argument can certainly be made that systemwide standards should be delayed, or perhaps phased in gradually.

Officials say the policy should be implemented next year for two major reasons. First, they feel applying the standards will push principals and teachers to make greater efforts to raise student achievement, and secondly, they think standards will demonstrate the need for more financial support. The questions remain: Will applying pressure help school personnel learn effective methods for improving student performance? Where will extra resources come from? Shouldn't they be added first? In this newsletter, CWEC explains the policy, and raises some issues for interested citizens to think about. The system shouldn't get tough unless it is also going to get better.

What could happen in a typical middle school?

Applying the new promotional standards to last year's student population at one of Boston's middle schools, we have been able to roughly predict what may happen when those standards are implemented. All figures are from June, 1983.

SCHOOL PROFILE, 6-83

530 total students
including
60 bilingual Spanish students
80 special ed. (.1, .2, .3) students
40 special needs (.4+) students

Average class size: 30 students
(for math and reading)
Chapter 1 Remediation:
220 students eligible
180 students served

APPLYING THE PROMOTIONAL STANDARDS

- 1) POINT ACCUMULATION:
Of the school's 530 students, 85 would not have accumulated enough points (passing grades) for promotion.
- 2) ATTENDANCE:
Though attendance averaged 89%, 50 students attended less than 85% and would not have been promoted.
- 3) DRP SCORES FOR 8TH GRADERS:
The requirement is a score of at least 52 on the DRP; 50 students scored less and would not have been promoted.
- 4) CURRICULUM TEST:
No data available.

How do Boston students score?

The Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) Test measures the degree of difficulty of material a student can read with good understanding. Scores range from 15-100, and the scores below are median scores, meaning that one-half of the students tested scored above that number, and one-half scored below.

GRADE.....	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
National Median...	37	44	50	55	60	64	67	71	74
Boston Median.....	40	46	49	54	59	61	62	66	70

The Metropolitan Achievement Tests in reading and math compare a student's achievement to other students across the country. For example, a Boston first grader who scored in the 52nd percentile did better than 52% of the first graders nationwide. The national median is always 50. NOTE: This is not one of Boston's standards for promotion, but is included here to give an indication of students' progress in reading and math.

GRADE.....	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
National.....	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Reading: Boston...	52	50	48	40	46	44	42	48	38	36	40
Math: Boston.....	52	50	52	44	52	44	42	42	30	36	38

A breakdown of the median percentiles for Boston's high schools shows more clearly student achievement compared to national standards. The median score below means that half of the students at that school scored above that number, half below.

Metropolitan Achievement Test READING SCORES, April, 1983

Boston Latin School.....	90
Boston Latin Academy.....	82
Boston Tech.....	52
Copley Square.....	42
Umana.....	36
East Boston.....	36
West Roxbury.....	30
Jamaica Plain.....	30
Hyde Park.....	26
Burke.....	26
Brighton.....	26
South Boston.....	26
English.....	23
Boston High.....	23
Charlestown.....	22
Madison Park.....	22
Dorchester.....	22

Metropolitan Achievement Test MATH SCORES, April, 1983

Boston Latin School.....	90
Boston Latin Academy.....	82
Boston Tech.....	60
Umana.....	34
East Boston.....	32
Copley Square.....	30
Boston High.....	26
South Boston.....	24
Brighton.....	23
Burke.....	23
Jamaica Plain.....	23
Madison Park.....	23
West Roxbury.....	22
Hyde Park.....	22
English.....	20
Dorchester.....	18
Charlestown.....	16

NOTE: All of the above scores include only about 3/5 of Boston's students. Most bilingual and special education students are not tested.

What ARE the new promotional standards?

Students will be promoted based on a newly revised report card, consisting of:

- 1) Grades from 4 marking periods, each counting for 1/5 of the final grade. A student's attendance must also be 85% or better to pass in any marking period.
- 2) The results of the end of the year Curriculum Test, counting for 1/5 of the final grade.
- 3) A minimum score on the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) Test will also be required for promotion/graduation in 3 grades: grade 5, 38; grade 8, 52; grade 12, 64.

If a student does not meet the standards, is failure automatic?

No. Each student's case will be reviewed by the principal. Extenuating circumstances---prolonged illness, too many substitute teachers, etc.---will be considered.

Does a student have to pass every subject on that final report card?

Elementary: a student must pass Reading, Language Arts, and Math. Besides passing these, a student may not fail more than two other subjects.

Middle: a student must earn 27 points during each year. For promotion to high school, a student must have accumulated 81 points, with a minimum of 10 points each in English, Reading, Social Studies, Math, Science/Health.

High: a student must accumulate 23 points to be promoted from 9th grade, 49 from 10th, 75 from 11th, and 105 to graduate. Of these 105, the minimums are: English-20, Social Studies-10, Math-10, Science-10, Phys. Ed.-4, and 2½ each in Health and Computer Science.

NOTE: in middle and high school, passing a major subject equals 5 points, and passing all subjects equals 35 points.

Who will be affected by these standards?

They will apply to all BPS students except kindergarteners. Each school will review the cases of special needs and bilingual students, and modify the standards if necessary. The modifications must be explained in writing to the principal and parents, and are subject to review higher up.

How will a parent and student know if the student is failing?

The policy prescribes steps for "early warning" for a student likely to fail:

FALL: teachers are to notify parents of students who are falling behind.

END OF JANUARY: teachers must send home a formal note alerting parents.

END OF FEBRUARY: teachers, parents and administrators must design a plan to give students extra help.

THE REST OF THE YEAR: the teacher must contact parents at least once every two months.

What will happen to a student who fails?

The student may go to summer school and pass (currently for middle and high schools only).

OR

The student will be retained in the same grade. The school will be required to develop an individual plan for the student that would include reasons why the student failed, the student's strengths, and methods that would help him succeed. Retained students would be placed, as much as possible, in smaller classes using different methods and materials. Schools will try not to send the student back to the same teacher the second year, except in elementary schools with only one class per grade.

continued...

Thank you to Anne Swanson, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, for her help with graphics.

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The promotional standards (cont.)

What else does the policy promise for students at risk of failing?

It calls for mandatory placement in small group instruction for all students whose scores on the DRP fall below certain cutoffs. The policy also states that summer school will be available to elementary students as well as middle and high school students.

The policy also lists a number of possible programs but it has not been definitely decided which will be started immediately.

If failure is recommended, but the parents object, what will happen?

The parents have the right to appeal the decision to the principal or headmaster.

When will the standards begin?

This school year, the standards are being used only to gather information on student achievement. Next year, 1984-1985, the policy will actually begin and the final report card standard, including attendance and the Curriculum Test, will be used. The year after that, 1985-1986, the DRP test standards will be added at the fifth, eighth, and twelfth grades.

How hard are Boston's standards?

Boston's standards put greater weight on a teacher's evaluation of everyday classwork than on tests so students won't automatically fail for being poor test takers. Since the Curriculum Test is a test of the new curriculum objectives, students will be tested only on what they all should have been taught. A passing grade is currently 60%, and the DRP minimum scores required are lower than the national average for that grade. For example, for promotion, an 8th grade student must score only 52 on the DRP, the equivalent of reading a childrens' magazine, with comprehension. In the future, as students progress, the standards will be upgraded.

How will the standards affect the Boston Compact?

In signing the Compact, the Boston School Committee committed itself to the ultimate goal of having all its graduates possess the skills needed to go on to higher education or a job. If the standards work, they will obviously help that goal. In the short run, however, the School Committee also committed itself to reducing the drop out rate each year by 5%. That goal will be difficult to reach if the standards are implemented without resources.

Questions to ask:

before they begin

- + Why not phase the standards in gradually, e.g., applying them only to 1st grade and 6th grade the first year?
- + Will teachers and principals be given adequate support and training to implement the new standards?
- + Are any teachers being selected and trained in more effective methods to teach students who are failing?
- + Will Boston spend what it has to do this effectively?
- + Could external funds---State Chapter 636 and federal Chapter 1---be used more effectively?

after they begin

- + Have principals devised creative remediation plans for their students?
- + What system-wide programs are in place for failing students?
- + Are failing students being placed in special ed. classes in lieu of more appropriate programs?
- + Are other subjects---art, music, etc.---suffering because of the pressure to meet the required course standards?
- + What resources in the community have been mobilized, and by whom, to help students who are failing?
- + Are students being forced out of school by these standards?

What does the BPS now offer to students who are behind?

PROGRAM:	DESCRIPTION:	SELECTION/CRITERIA	FY84 COST:
CHAPTER 1: 11,500 students in 87 schools	daily, small group remedial classes with special teachers. Students are "pulled out" of regular classes to attend. Mostly reading, some math and English as Second Language.	students must be in Chap.1- designated schools serving low income neighborhoods, and score below 40th percentile on Metropolitan Achievement Test. Those in most need of help are selected.	\$10.25M federal money
SUMMER SCHOOL: 1,800 students from all middle and high schools	regular courses. Beginning last summer, grades 6 & 7 had a new program teaching basic skills.	selection by principal, usually students who need to pass 1 or 2 subjects for promotion	\$92,000 regular BPS budget
GRADE 6 READING PROGRAM: 1,800- 2,000 students, in most middle schools	All 6th grade students reading 2 or more years below grade level are placed in reading classes of no more than 15 students.	automatic placement by reading score	\$708,168 regular BPS budget
CHAPTER 636 REMEDIAL: 5312 students in 51 schools **	variety of programs funded by grants to districts. Some are directly remedial; some are small group programs for all students; a few are aimed at improving motivation and attendance. Most are pull out programs.	varies ** NOTE: Boston receives \$5.5M for <u>all</u> 636 programs. These figures apply only to those described here.	\$725,122 State funds for deseg- regation **
ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS-REMEDIAL: 155 students	Log School(District 5 middle school); Home Base (Madison Park); Boston Prep	varies	\$388,385 regular BPS budget & 636 funds
ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS-NOT SPECIFICALLY REMEDIAL: 317 students	Fenway School (English High); School Within a School (South Boston High); New Horizons (King Middle School)	varies	\$92,445 regular BPS budget & 636 funds

SUMMARY: Almost all BPS remedial programs are funded by State or federal money. Most operate by pulling students out of their classes for certain periods, a method questioned by many because it interferes with classroom work. In addition, most are rarely coordinated with classroom work.

Though not meant to be, Chapter 766 (special education) is by far the largest remediation program in Boston. Most of the mainstreamed students (7,000+) and many of the substantially separate students (3,000+) are placed there because of academic deficiencies rather than for physical or mental handicaps.

Many students working below grade level are not in any remedial program. Almost 40 BPS schools are not eligible for Chapter 1, though there are eligible students in all of them, and even where it does operate, only a part of those eligible can be served.

What are teachers thinking?

The greatest share of the responsibility for improved student achievement falls on the classroom teachers. They must struggle with widely varying levels of skills among students, with students who learn in different ways, with students' social problems, and with countless daily distractions. In preparing this Newsletter, CWEC staff visited 32 schools and talked with nearly 200 teachers. Here is what we found:

- + Teachers almost unanimously favor some uniform standard of promotion for three reasons:
 - 1) A Boston high school diploma currently has very little value.
 - 2) The range of skill levels among students in their classes is so great teaching is very difficult.
 - 3) There is wide divergence in standards among individual schools and teachers.
- + Teachers note that many students are currently working below grade level, but working hard and making progress and passing. They commented that when all students are tested on the level of the grade they are in, thousands will fail.
- + Teachers have major reservations, and feel strongly that a promotional policy is unfair to everyone unless certain issues are addressed beforehand:
 - 1) Class size. This emerged in discussions in all schools. Remediation, teachers felt,

wouldn't be so necessary if they had a reasonable number of students. Thirty students per class, given their range of skill levels, decreases any teacher's confidence and lowers his expectations.

2) Curriculum objectives. Teachers strongly support the new curriculum objectives. They feel in certain subjects, however, especially science, that they are too hard, given the limited science hundreds of Boston's students have been taught and the limited exposure to science of most teachers.

3) Textbooks and supplies. At the middle school level, especially, schools do not have enough textbooks, nor do they allow students to take them home. Many saw the situation as an impediment to stricter standards.

4) Attendance. Teachers were mildly optimistic about students' eventually meeting a much higher attendance standard, but felt it would take a long time, as much as two years.

- + Teachers, finally, noted the lack of any systemwide remediation program and fear that a greater number of students---both those far behind and repeated failures---will be referred to special education (Chapter 766) for help.
-

"In 5 years, the system will have higher test scores. Why? All the failures will drop out."
---a BPS principal

Remediation: some changes likely next year

The promotion policy includes a long list of programs that might be adopted to help students who fail or who are at risk of failing. CWEC met with school officials to determine which are being planned for next year. Several seem likely: expanding the sixth grade targeted reading program to seventh grade, and an expansion of the basic skills program in summer school.

Besides those two, however, no system-wide remediation programs are planned. Instead, the responsibility will be placed with the individual principals. The budget office is currently working with high school and middle school principals on providing each school with enough teachers to give extra help to students in their schools who

scored below the 30th percentile on standardized tests. High school enrollments will probably be about the same next year, and the number of teachers at that level is expected to also remain constant. To give remedial help therefore, some schools are claiming that they will have to reduce course offerings that are not required for graduation. At the middle school level, enrollments will drop but the number of teachers will stay the same. Most middle school principals, therefore, should be able to provide extra help to students far behind.

Plans at the elementary level call for the addition of about 25 teachers overall to reduce class size in grades K-3.

Cautions and encouragement from elsewhere

The Atlanta, District of Columbia and New York City public schools have all initiated promotional standards since 1980. Atlanta requires that a student master 25 skills each in reading and math, and in the lower grades, complete a basal reader. A student in D.C. must master 70% of specific math skills and 70% of specific reading skills. The "gates policy" of New York uses just one criterion---scores from the California Achievement Test---and their standards are low. A 7th grader must score at only the 5th grade level to pass. To Boston's credit, its standards rely on several factors: grades, test scores, attendance. Despite this difference, the experiences of these cities can help Boston avoid, as one administrator put it, "the great agony of those first few years."

THEIR ADVICE**

- 1) GO SLOWLY. Atlanta began with the first grade in 1980, and has added one grade each year since. D.C. spent 4 years planning their policy; implementation began with grades 1-2-3 in 1980, with grades 4 to 9 to be included by 1985.
 - 2) EXPECT THAT MANY STUDENTS WILL FAIL, AT FIRST. In D.C., 50% of the students failed the first cutoff. After two years, 20% of New York's 4th and 7th graders, the only students their standards apply to, were in the same grade for the third straight year.
 - 3) DECREASE CLASS SIZE, ESPECIALLY IN THE LOWER GRADES. The United Parents' Association of New York, in its monitoring report, states, "The single most important success factor is small class size, 20 being OK, 15 being ideal."
 - 4) DEVELOP CREATIVE REMEDIATION PLANS. Some of the techniques they use include: double period reading classes with no more than 10 students; computer assisted instruction; voluntary before and after school tutoring; in-class Chapter 1, rather than a pullout program; school teams for early identification of high risk students; all day kindergarten; mastery learning; gimmicks to increase attendance.
 - 5) GET PARENTS INVOLVED, FROM THE BEGINNING. Atlanta's policy clearly outlines what must be communicated to parents, and when. Parents in D.C. receive comic books explaining what skills their children should be covering and games to do at home. D.C. also requires that each school hold at least one parent workshop each year.
 - 6) RECRUIT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY TO HELP. One thousand D.C. residents, many famous, sign contracts to tutor a retaine, one-to-one, four hours a week, and summer jobs program employees tutor in summer school. Media support is critical; brief them frequently on progress.
 - 7) ANTICIPATE MORE MONEY, BUT NOT FOR LONG. In D.C., the school budget was fully funded the year after so many students failed. But New York warns, "It doesn't last."
 - 8) SUCCESS MAY FOLLOW, EVENTUALLY. Generally it was agreed that as the policy is taken more seriously, it becomes more successful. Fourth grade teachers in Atlanta, now teaching the class that has benefited from 4 years of implementation, are finding that they can divide their classes into 3 or 4 reading groups, instead of 10. More than half of Atlanta's K-7 students are now above the national average on standardized tests, and D.C.'s success is similar. New York's reliance on test scores only has resulted in a backlog of students who cannot be passed. The city is now implementing preventive policies, such as full day kindergarten and smaller class sizes for all students.
 - 9) MAKE CERTAIN THAT STANDARDS DON'T SUBSTITUTE FOR A SOUND EDUCATION. To quote the UPA again, "The system must be responsive to the needs of all children at all times. Providing needed services before failure is the best way to operate. Children are entitled to more than a policy that fails them first, and helps them second."
- ** THEY INCLUDE: Pat Summers of the Atlanta Public Schools and Marcia Klenbort of Atlanta's APPLE Corps; Dr. James Guines and Mary Harbeck of D.C.'s Public Schools; and Barbara Hruska of New York's United Parent Association.

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**INSIDE: Boston's New Promotional
Standards-What's coming?**

COMING: External Funding-
Where does all the money go?
And why?

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CITY-WIDE
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NEWSLETTER

volume 1 number 3

may / june 1983

BPS BUDGET REVIEW: FY '83-'84 Is \$224.5M enough?

For a long time, funding for the public schools has been an incomprehensible and controversial subject for many Bostonians. "With all that money, why don't the kids learn? Is more money needed?" are frequently heard questions. That the schools cost a great deal of money---more than most systems---and yet don't educate the students very well is clear. Why this is so is not the subject of this Newsletter; this Newsletter concentrates, rather, on how the dollars are spent.

Many of the items in the BPS budget are fixed by forces now beyond school control.

analysis Approximately twenty percent of all BPS students are classified as having "special needs," and receive services as required by Chapter 766 of the State laws. Twelve percent are assigned to bilingual classes, also required by the State. Both of these types of students, as shown below, cost more to educate than regular education students. Most other systems, including urban ones, have between ten and twenty percent of their students in these costlier programs, not thirty-two percent.

Fifty-five percent of the student body is provided with transportation, at a cost of \$18.2 M, over eight percent of the total budget. Boston has the same (continued),

BPS: per pupil costs, FY '83-'84

\$224.5M

(including \$2.4M reserve)

Type of student:	Regular Ed.	Bilingual	Special Ed: .1,.2,&.3*	.4*	.5*	.6*
Cost of:						
Reg.Ed. Teacher.....	\$1376 (7/7 time)	\$ 393 (2/7 time)	\$ 967	\$ 393	AVERAGE TUITION COSTS FOR THESE STUDENTS:	
Bilingual or Spec.Ed.Teacher.....	\$ 0	\$1434 (5/7 time)	\$ 910	\$3883	\$13,410	\$35,000
Transportation.....	\$ 236	\$ 236	\$ 236	\$1195	\$ 2,094	\$ 0
Shared Costs+.....	<u>\$1628</u>	<u>\$1628</u>	<u>\$1971</u>	<u>\$1971</u>	<u>\$ 584</u>	<u>\$ 584</u>
TOTAL PER PUPIL.....	\$3240	\$3691	\$4084	\$7442	\$16,088	\$35,584
Number in BPS.....	38,906	6416	7241	3196	1003	50

+ administration, physical plant, support staff, fixed costs and others.

* .1,.2,.3 students with special needs who are in a regular classroom 7/7, 5/7, or 4/7 time and in a special ed.(resource) room the remainder of the time.

* .4 students with special needs in a substantially separate classroom with occasional mainstreaming in art, music, gym, etc.

* .5 students with severe special needs that cannot be met in the BPS and who are day students at a school outside the system.

* .6 students with severe special needs that cannot be met in the BPS and who are residents at a school outside the system.

Is \$224.5M enough? (cont.)

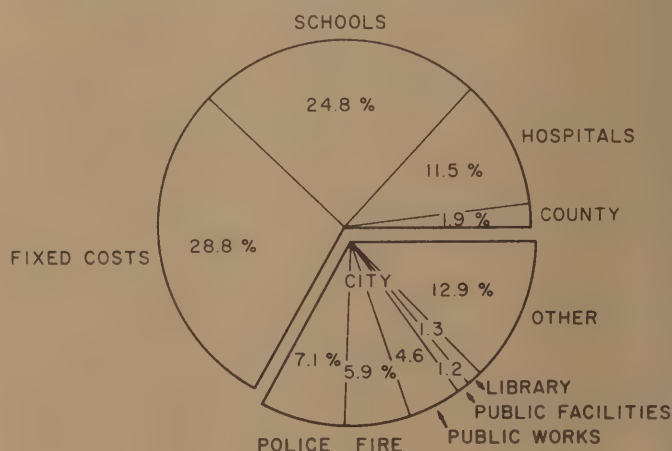
number of administrative districts, nine, for 55,000 students as it had for 90,000 students, and each district costs a minimum of \$100,000 to maintain. Because of a long history of having a school in each neighborhood, Boston has too many schools still open, many of which are difficult to justify keeping open from either an educational or cost-effectiveness point of view. (This does not mean all small elementary schools should be closed; some of these schools are the best in the system and warrant foregoing the estimated \$65,000 savings that would be realized). In some schools, highly paid administrators are performing routine clerical tasks. In seven schools, there is both a principal (average \$39,000) and an assistant principal (average \$33,000) even though there are only 350 students. Because of extensive layoffs the last two years, 75% of Boston's teachers are earning their maximum level, causing a high average teacher's salary. Wages bargained for by other of the schools' unions, such as custodians and bus drivers, are comparatively high.

Which of these factors can be changed for the next fiscal and school year? Practically speaking, none.

All of these issues are bound by legal, contractual, or judicial constraints that make change before September not possible. To run the schools on \$224.5M, \$10M less than last year, then, means that once again money will be saved by the only means available, laying off teachers, an unacceptable solution. No system can endure the instability Boston has had to bear in the last two years and still show improved performance. The long overdue overhaul of management is praiseworthy, but the educational payoff has yet to appear, as demonstrated recently in the reading scores, and it will not appear until each school achieves a stable staff, united around a common goal. The management and curricular reforms set in place by Superintendent Spillane should, in the long term, result in improved performance and accountability, but in the short term, the solution can only be one of no more layoffs. The answer is not just money, but for now, that is what is needed.

ALLOCATION OF CITY MONEY, FY '84

In the pie graph below, the schools are listed as receiving \$238M, the amount requested, but not yet received, by the School Department. Under a total city budget of \$958M, the schools represent almost 25%, the largest department by far. If one subtracts fixed costs the city cannot control, the schools represent 35% of the total budget. (SOURCE: Boston Municipal Research Bureau)



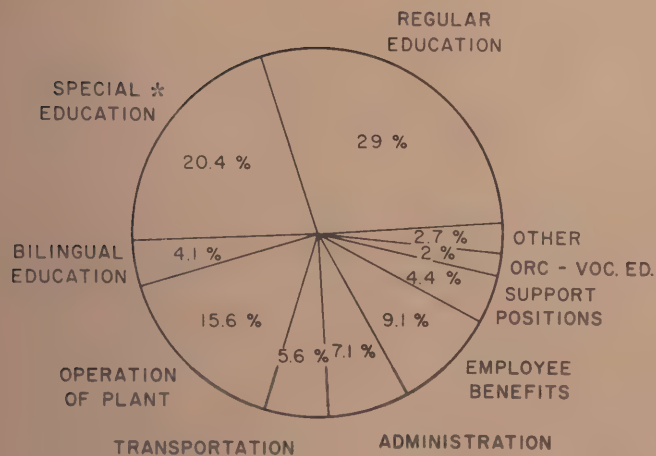
ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE:

Source: Educational Research Service, 82-83

	students	teachers	schools	per pupil costs	Supt. salary	
ATLANTA	68,300	3,550	111	\$ 2,556	\$ 65,293	ATLANTA
CHICAGO	429,000	21,178	497	\$ 3,011	\$120,000	CHICAGO
HOUSTON	194,073	9,849	224	\$ 2,516	\$ 96,000	HOUSTON
NEW YORK CITY	927,586	53,706	931	\$ 3,300	\$ 85,000	NEW YORK
PHILADELPHIA	194,628	9,135	271	\$ 3,390	\$ 68,000	PHILA.
SAN FRANCISCO	61,300	2,749	94	\$ 3,475	\$ 68,500	SAN FRAN.
BOSTON	56,652	3,610	127	\$ 4,130	\$ 60,000	BOSTON

THE BPS BUDGET: where it all goes

FY '84: \$224.5M



* includes transportation; see below

HISTORY OF SCHOOL DEPARTMENT SPENDING

YEAR:	SPENT: (millions)	CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR:
1975-76	\$171.1m	-----
1976-77	\$170.6m	- \$.6m
1977-78	\$174.3m	+ \$ 3.8m
1978-79	\$194.6m	+ \$20.2m
1979-80	\$212.0m	+ \$17.5m
1980-81	\$243.0m	+ \$32.7m
1981-82	\$214.5m	- \$28.5m
1982-83	\$234.0m*	+ \$19.5m
1983-84 (projected)	\$224.5m	- \$ 9.5m

* Includes two years of BTU raises

REGULAR EDUCATION/KINDERGARTEN: teachers, supplies, substitutes.....	\$64.3m
SPECIAL ED.: teachers, aides, Evaluation Team Leader, trans., tuition...	\$45.4m
OPERATION OF PLANT: heat, repair, custodians.....	\$34.7m
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS: insurance, unemployment, pension.....	\$20.2m
TRANSPORTATION: regular and MBTA.....	\$12.4m
SUPPORT POSITIONS: librarians, counselors, coaches, etc.....	\$ 9.7m
BILINGUAL ED.: teachers, aides, supplies, guidance.....	\$ 9.2m
SCHOOL-BASED ADMINISTRATION: principals, asst. principals, clerical.....	\$ 8.1m
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION.....	\$ 6.9m
OTHER COSTS: adult education, audio visual, CPC, lunch monitors.....	\$ 6.0m
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: administration and teachers.....	\$ 4.4m
DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION.....	\$.8m

*not including \$2.4m in reserve

\$222.1m*

What does the \$224.5 million budget buy?

Boston's schools all teach basic reading and language arts and math, but what else can they do other than meet most minimal requirements?

It buys the education of:

- 55,759 students, approximately
 - 24,500 elementary & K2
 - 13,500 middle school
 - 17,500 high school

the maintenance of:

- 127 schools
 - 78 elementary
 - 24 middle schools
 - 18 high schools
 - 7 alternative or spec. needs

the salaries of:

- 631 administrators

the salaries of:

- 3,473 teachers
 - 2252.5 regular education
 - 694 special needs
 - 374.5 bilingual
 - 108 vocational education
 - 44 on long-term paid leave

transportation costs of:

- \$18,207,000 including
 - \$9,827,000 for racial balance
 - \$8,380,000 for special needs, MBTA, field trips, etc.

and more specifically, it buys:

READING:

Reading is the one area where even though there was less money than last year, money was set aside to concentrate, at least at one grade level, sixth, on students who were behind. Next year every sixth grader who is two years or more behind will be in a reading class of no more than 15. In addition, every school will have a certified reading teacher assigned to the sixth grade. Usually remediation is handled with external funds or in a special needs classification.

COMPUTERS:

Eighty-nine of the 127 schools will have at least one. Many were purchased with funds other than general school funds, and some were bought this year with \$475,000 in energy savings funds and block grant money.

Elementary: 46 schools will have computers next year, ranging from many schools with 1 or 2 to a few with 15 or more. Only one school has a fully developed program.

Middle: many schools are just beginning; one has a fully developed program. All but 4 of the 24 schools have at least 5 computers, though not all have fully developed programs yet.

COMPUTERS (cont.)

High School: all 18 regular high schools will have fairly complete computer labs (at least 15 computers). A student's experience will depend on his or her program and the number of students in the school.

GUIDANCE:

Elementary: there is one guidance counselor at only one school.

Middle: at least one guidance counselor at each school, with a ratio of 362 students to one counselor (average).

High School: at least one guidance counselor at each school, with a ratio of 400:1 (average).

LANGUAGES:

Elementary: none except advanced work classes.

Middle School: 12 schools offer none, the other 12 offer either Spanish or French to a small percentage of students.

High School: Spanish is taught at 17 schools, French (13), Latin (2), Greek (2), German (2), Italian (3) and Portuguese (1).

MUSIC:

Elementary: most do not have music teachers though a few do have one two or three days a week. (continued)

more specifically (cont.):

Middle: 9 of the 24 schools will have music teachers and a few others have a teacher two or three days a week. Some of those 9 schools have a school chorus.

High School: 7 of the 18 schools have music teachers, 11 have none, though some have a teacher who comes one or two days a week.

Only one school has a full orchestra. Only two schools have full bands. Four of the 18 high schools have school choruses. Here and there exist small ensembles or concert groups.

ART:

Supplies: \$10,000 in central office; other supplies must come from each school's per pupil budget.

Elementary: 7 teachers who travel to 65 of 78 schools; sessions of 90 minutes each, 4-12 times a year, and who train teachers to teach art.

Middle: 1 fulltime teacher in each of 12 middle schools, none in the remaining 12 schools.

High School: 26 fulltime teachers in 14 of 18 high schools.

CLASS SIZE:

Elementary: In the ten largest schools (over 500) classes have 28 to 33 students. In the nine smallest schools (under 150) there is rarely a class over 22. In the other 59, classes run about 25.

Middle: Most middle schools, except for the eight small ones, have class sizes of thirty, sometimes more.

High: At the beginning of the year, all of the required courses have 28 to 30.

LIBRARY SERVICES:

Each school now has a library, and an aide or librarian at least once a week, often more.

Books: \$50,000/year for all schools from their per pupil supply budgets. The library department was also given money from unexpended funds to buy books from the new curriculum reading lists for each school.

Elementary: 3 schools with professional librarians, the remainder have aides, part-time or full-time.

Middle: 12 schools have librarians, the other 12 have an aide and/or librarian part-time.

High School: each school has a full-time librarian, except Copley High which uses the Copley Public Library.

Centrally: 2 librarians coordinate all programs; 1 librarian runs the Bilingual Library at the Blackstone School; 1 aide runs the Administration Library at Court St.

ADDITIONAL FUNDS:

In addition to the money received from the city, the schools also receive about \$30M more of state and federal program money. The three largest programs are: 1) Chapter 1 (federal), \$10.1M, which by and large is used for supplementary reading programs for students who are behind. It funds about 250 teachers plus aides and administrators.

2) Food services (federal), \$7.6M, for school lunches.

3) Chapter 636 (state), \$5M, a program designed primarily to promote desegregation. It is through this program money that some schools are able to provide more science, art, and music than the base budget allows, although there is not enough money for all schools to participate every year. Approximately 40% of these funds are used for college/university/cultural institution pairings.

WHAT OTHER TOWNS SPEND: PER PUPIL COSTS, FY 82-83

Source: Educational Research Serv.

Town:	Per Pupil:	Enrollment:
ARLINGTON.....	\$2,873	5388
CENT. BERKSHIRE...	\$3,231	2195
CHELSEA.....	\$1,920	3387
CONCORD-CARLISLE.	\$4,381	3013
DUXBURY.....	\$2,297	3179

Town:	Per Pupil:	Enrollment:
LAWRENCE.....	\$1,944	8367
LENOX.....	\$3,545	729
NEEDHAM.....	\$3,114	4528
QUINCY.....	\$2,354	10300
SPRINGFIELD.....	\$2,163	22576

What will the \$14.3M supplemental budget add?

The School Committee has requested that the Mayor appropriate \$14.3 over the base, and would use the money for the programs listed below. If that happened, 350 staff could be funded, and there would be hiring instead of layoffs. Supplemental budgets are sometimes viewed as extra, as programs that are helpful but not essential. A careful examination of these additions, however, reveals that in this case, the additional \$14M is needed for programs crucial to turning a weak system around.

- 1) EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS (EDP), CLASS SIZE REDUCTION, K-1.....\$ 4.45 million
to retain 16 K-2 EDP; to restore K-1 and make all K-1 programs extended day programs;
to add 35 more grade 1 and 2 teachers to reduce maximum class size from 33 to 22.
- 2) MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC PROGRAM.....\$ 2.65 million
to standardize course offerings in all middle and high schools; will add 93 teachers
in Theatre Arts (1), Fine Arts (11), Phys. Ed. (16), Social Studies (8), Sciences (12),
Home Ec./Industrial Arts (30), Music (13), Foreign Languages (2).
- 3) MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL BASIC SKILLS RESOURCES.....\$ 1.74 million
to add 33 teachers for English and Math; in-service training; high school tutoring.
- 4) BILINGUAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION.....\$ 1.07 million
to restore 25 teaching positions; to hire 4 staff to implement compliance laws; to
add 10 teachers at 3 schools to offer programs that in the past required expensive
outside placement.
- 5) BOSTON COMPACT.....\$.975million
\$40,000-\$60,000 for each high school for staff training, job placement, supplies,
student tutoring.
- 6) INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION.....\$.96 million
to continue support for School Based Management, for School Improvement Programs, for
7 targeted high schools with special problems, and for the Alternative Education Program
for difficult students failing academically at two middle and two high schools.
- 7) ATHLETICS, SWIMMING, PHYSICAL EDUCATION.....\$.95 million
to continue swimming programs with 20 instructors, and to restore 86 coaching jobs.
- 8) VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND SECURITY.....\$.50 million
to add 15-20 security people, and for voc. ed. equipment and supplies.
- 9) MIDDLE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION.....\$.29 million
to hire 8-10 administrators who would help with record-keeping, scheduling, staff
evaluation, and supervision.

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE:

Average Salaries...Teacher		High School Principal	Source: Educational Research Service, 82-83			
			Substitute	Secretary	Custodian	Cafeteria
ATLANTA	\$21,400	\$38,332	\$36/day	\$16,803	\$6.86/hr.	\$5.87/hr.
CHICAGO	\$24,843	no data	\$49-55/day	no data	no data	no data
HOUSTON	\$21,152	\$43,570	\$46.50/day	\$16,516	\$5.56/hr.	\$5.56/hr.
NEW YORK CITY	\$25,018	\$46,218	\$50/day	no data	no data	no data
PHILADELPHIA	\$26,954	\$42,487	\$23/day	\$18,359	\$8.17/hr.	no data
SAN FRANCISCO	\$26,885	\$42,440	\$51-72/day	\$17,952	\$7.36/hr.	\$7.15/hr.
BOSTON	\$27,315	\$39,643	\$42-50/day	\$11,000*	\$8.36/hr.	\$4.81/hr.

* which includes extensive use of per diem help at \$28-\$33 per day, lowering the average.

THE BUDGET PROCESS: two views...

AN INSIDER'S VIEW:

Thomas Ziola
Chief Coordinator
Office of the Budget, BPS

The proposed BPS budget, the end result of thousands of hours of BPS staff time, represents one of the few times when policies take concrete expression and force resource allocation decisions. As such, the budget process generates healthy debate and focuses the attention of the community. With limited funds, the debate intensifies because not all common educational goals can be adequately addressed. The \$238 M budget sent to the Mayor, however, represents 350 staff and would eliminate the need for most layoffs. Our key objectives in crafting the budget were first to meet our financial obligations in a way that would maximize our educational product. With \$10M less than last year, we had to develop a base budget that would ensure that we could open the schools with sufficient staffing to meet perceived program needs.

Secondly, we had to maximize the equal distribution of our scarce resources. A distribution formula for those basic resources which compensates for varying needs was crucial. Although some may object to the results of this kind of approach, the underlying interest in equity cannot be compromised.

Finally, our third goal was to allow for funding for the BPS' stated priorities for next year.

Looking back, I think we achieved a credible level of success in meeting these objectives, though the process could be improved. Earlier in the year we must develop a valid school-site planning effort which includes measurable goals and mechanisms to improve educational performance. More research and evaluation information is needed about successful educational strategies. But it will only be through dedication, solid educational programs, sound teaching methods, strong leadership, and clear levels of accountability that the system will meet its educational agenda.

AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

Jon Westling
Associate Provost
Boston University

I respect the extraordinary difficulties under which the BPS budget staff must work, and they deserve great credit for the strides that have already been made. Nonetheless, the proposed budget for '83-84 which was presented to the Budget Subcommittee in early March remains a textbook example of central budgeting. That is, the budget was not prepared on the basis of an analysis of the actual cost of the functions and services to be performed by the schools, but rather on the basis of allocation formulas developed by the central office.

There are substantial disadvantages to this sort of budgeting. Because the budget was not developed by carefully establishing needs on a classroom by classroom, program by program basis, it bears no necessary relation to those needs. This, in turn, makes the budget much harder to implement. Any manager on the spot, seeing that the budget he or she has been given for a particular program is not related to the real needs of the program, is unlikely to implement the budget with scrupulous accuracy.

Both educationally and financially, a functional budget is not just desirable, it is a necessity.

In the absence of a functional budget, the only thing that an outside observer can say about the budget that was presented to the Budget Subcommittee is that its arithmetic is correct. Neither I nor the other members of the Budget Subcommittee can responsibly certify that the BPS actually need the proposed level of funding---or, indeed, any other level of funding. The evidence is simply not there.

CWEC is grateful to Mr. Michael Fung, Principal of the Taft Middle School and CWEC Board member, for preparing the statistical information for this Newsletter.

The pie graphs were prepared by
Red Dot Graphics.

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CITY-WIDE
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NEWSLETTER

volume 1 number 2

january / february 1983

CONTRACT ISSUES: 1983-'84-'85-'86

In the next few weeks, negotiations will begin between the School Committee and the Boston Teachers' Union. Nothing else that will happen in the next three years exceeds these negotiations in importance. Several of the directions set by the present administration cannot succeed without alterations in the present contract and concessions on both sides. At issue are decision-making powers as well as dollars. In the past two contracts, the BTU, bargaining with school committees very different from the present one, gained rights they feel are now theirs, but those provisions conflict with efforts underway to improve learning in the schools. Is the Union ready to accede to students' needs so that progress can

background

go forward? Is the School Committee ready to make some educational decisions, set the price tag, and go after the money that is needed to carry out the decisions? Can the negotiations be conducted in such a way that the morale of the teachers, already low, won't be further damaged?

The system is at a crossroads. Positive educational steps have been tentatively taken, but they cannot reach their full potential without changes. At the end of the day, the needs of the students must take precedence over any other considerations or anyone else's "rights." In a system where two-thirds of the sixth graders read below grade level, where probably a third of the high school students don't graduate, it cannot be otherwise. In this Newsletter, CWEC focuses on the needed changes.

New Directions / Roadblocks

In the past ten months, discussion about the Boston Public Schools' hoped-for turnaround has centered on several programs and practices: new educational leadership; the forming of the Institute for Professional Development; implementation of uniform curriculum objectives; School Based Management; the School Improvement Program. Most of these efforts are just beginning, and have not yet reached the point of having an effect on how well or how much students learn. Many of them involve a shift in power to the schools and to the principal.

How is each affected by the terms of the present contracts for teachers (BTU), administrators (BASAS), and the custodians (Boston Schools Custodians Assoc.)?

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP Research overwhelmingly supports the contention that a critical factor in improving education in a school is the principal. In Boston, principals have rarely been moved or removed, whether or not their schools were

operating successfully; once one was assigned to a school, he or she was usually able to stay there until retirement or death. The present Superintendent has listed accountability as a top priority.

Contract effect Last year for the first time, there was a detailed evaluation of principals. They were rated excellent, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory on a variety of items, including educational leadership. The ratings were done by the community superintendents. Although there are many items in the evaluation dealing with parents and community, those two were not necessarily involved. Some principals received unsatisfactory on specific items, but none received an overall unsatisfactory rating, even though it seems to outsiders their schools are failing by most measurements. Twenty-two principals, however, were moved for the "good of the system," a power the Superintendent can exercise.

Possible Solution The School Committee

has already agreed with the Citywide Parents' Council that parents will be included in the next round of evaluations. A formal mechanism for seeking wider input, from teachers as well as parents, would give the evaluation process more credibility.

INSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Like other professionals, teachers need ongoing education and periodic renewal, especially as new programs are introduced. Last Fall, Boston set up an Institute for Professional Development to undertake a long range program.

Contract effect Most of the teacher training and support must be done when teachers are not teaching. Other than programs that are offered on a voluntary basis, all preparation of teachers for new programs or discussions and workshops designed to stimulate better teaching must be done during inservice time, the ten times a year that BPS students are released two hours early from school. The present contract specifies that of these ten two hour sessions, seven must be "programmed and conducted" by the teachers in a building "in cooperation with the principal." Only the other three are left to the School Department to plan. In practical terms, this very often means that inservice is treated lightly and used for making announcements, after which teachers go home early or go back to their rooms and do paper work. With only these six hours access to teachers, the Institute cannot plan and execute a comprehensive program.

Possible solutions Return the responsibility for improving the quality of inservice time to the Institute by placing the planning for the year's program in their hands. Extend the inservice time to two and one half hours and increase the number of inservice days to twelve, perhaps spacing them in a more concentrated way. This would add six extra hours to the teacher's year, and make parents plan for two additional short days, an equitable distribution for the burden. Provide some time for elementary teachers to talk together and cooperate on their efforts.

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES Last September, a new set of curriculum objectives in Math and Reading/Language Arts was introduced system-wide in grades kindergarten through eight. For the first time in many years, Boston has a unified and coherent group of

objectives in those areas. The goal for next September is to add Social Studies and Science and to complete objectives in all four areas for all grades. Superintendent Spillane has expressed his desire that eventually Boston will set promotional standards based on a mastery of many of these objectives.

Contract effect As in the case of the Institute, there has been little time to work with the teachers on implementing these objectives. Orientation sessions were held in September for principals, who were given the responsibility for explaining the objectives to the teachers. Since that time, follow-up has been left to the principals; some have spent time, others have not. At most elementary schools, the principals have no meeting time with teachers other than inservice time.

Possible solution It will be difficult to add two more sets of objectives and to require mastery of certain ones for promotion under the present contract which allows principals little time to work with teachers and exercise educational leadership. The inservice plan worked out by the Institute could factor this need into their plan. The School Department might also trade the fifteen minutes a day teachers are required to stay after school for a concentrated one hour, one day a week, which could be used for meetings with the principal, other teachers, or parents.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM The Boston School Improvement Program is a plan adopted this year in Boston that was developed in other systems on research known as effective schools research. Schools that worked well were studied minutely and factors common to all schools isolated. The five factors most frequently cited in studies are strong administrative leadership, clear academic goals, frequent testing of these academic objectives, a school climate conducive to learning, and high expectations on the part of the teachers for all students. Following the model developed by Dr. Ron Edmonds, Boston is piloting SIP programs in fifteen schools, trying to develop these five factors in the schools.

Contract effect At the heart of School Improvement is the developing, over three

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- 1 **CLASS SIZE** In the class size clause, what recognition has been given to the thousands of regular ed students who need smaller classes to get a good start or to catch up?
- 2 **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION** Has the School Committee committed itself to affirmative action levels in the contract, regardless of the outcomes of court cases?
- 3 **STABILITY OF STAFF** Have any safeguards been introduced so that the impact of transfer and bumping is minimized?
- 4 **TEACHER CERTIFICATION** What refinements have been introduced so that certification areas are not so broad? For example, has the math certification been narrowed so that teachers who can only teach Algebra 1 are not bumping teachers who can teach any math, including Calculus?
- 5 **PLANNING TIME** What provisions have been included to give elementary teachers at least one planning period per week?
- 6 **TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS** Have any steps been taken to involve administrators, especially principals, in the assignment of teachers?
- 7 **PERFORMANCE EVALUATION** Has this process been improved so that it is reasonable, credible, has input from all the school community, and provides a balance between the rights of the teacher or administrator, and the rights of the students to a capable teacher or administrator?
- 8 **INSERVICE TIME** Has the Institute for Professional Development been given the time and authority it needs to direct a comprehensive staff development program?
- 9 **PARENTS** Has time been included for at least two evening or weekend parent conference times?
- 10 **STRENGTHENING INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS** Have the headmasters and principals been given sufficient flexibility to be educational leaders, accountable for their schools? Do the custodians and other staff report to them?

**Let the School Committee
know you are interested.**

to five years, a team of people at a school that works together in building the factors of effectiveness. As long as Boston is losing students and laying off teachers, the present bumping and transfer clauses in the contract assure far-reaching movement of teachers. School Improvement began last year in some schools, and this year some of those same schools experienced a fifty percent turnover in staff and had to begin work and planning all over again. The lack of any planning time at the elementary level also limits the team building and planning necessary for this kind of program to take root.

Possible solutions Protect from transfer and bumping the teachers in School Improvement Schools who are not laid off.

Increase the principal's access to teachers by consolidating the after-school time on a single day each week, as suggested under Curriculum.

SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT School based management is a shifting of control from the central office to the school level. Decision-making at the school, which involves all facets of the school community, focuses on ways to match resources, services, budget, and personnel to particular student needs. In Boston this year seven schools are piloting this system, working for educational change and improvement.

continued on page 6

ONE SIDE...

Anticipating the expiration of its present contract on August 31, 1983, the BTU has been working since September to put its negotiating package together. The Union's Collective Bargaining Committee invited submissions of items from the Union membership and then drafted a package which was approved by a majority vote of the membership in January.

On economic issues, the membership authorized a request for a 20% across the board pay increase.

Determined not to allow the School Department to write off the 600 teachers still laid-off, the BTU will be seeking an extension of the recall rights. Whether it takes two years or ten years, the BTU believes that every person laid-off should be given the opportunity to return to his or her career as soon as possible. This is a top priority for the Union.

Two other issues which the Union will be pushing hard for are a reduction in class size, and planning time for elementary teachers.

Both parents and teachers recognize that the current class size maximums of 33 (elementary) and 36 (secondary) are educationally unsound and unrealistic for an urban school system. Hopefully, parents and teachers working together can convince the School Committee to adopt a class size policy that will allow for an improved teaching and learning situation.

The Boston school system is years behind the times on the issue of planning time for elementary teachers. Although secondary teachers have had a daily 45 minute planning period for over a decade, such planning time has not been made available to elementary teachers. Many other systems surrounding Boston have implemented such a program, but School Committee negotiators have resisted year after year. The Union hopes that 1983-1984 will see the introduction of planning time for our elementary teachers.

The Union will raise a score of other issues, both economic and educational. The Union membership fully expects that the existing contract will be attacked on a number of fronts. Dr. Spillane has already earned the reputation for being anti-union, anti-collective bargaining, anti-seniority, anti-teacher rights, and pro-strong management rights. Whether this reputation is fully deserved remains to be seen. The BTU hopes that an equitable contract settlement can be reached prior to the opening of the 1983-1984 school year.

If any group of parents would like a further update on negotiations, the Union will be happy to send a spokesperson from the Negotiating Team to discuss the Union's position on any negotiating topic.

-by Kathy Kelley, BTU President

DOLLARS AND CENTS: MBTA SALARY COMPARISONS, 4-1-83

SOURCE: MBTA ADVISORY BOARD

COLLECTOR.....\$24,445.62
(after 30 months)

BUS/TROLLEY/TRAIN DRIVER.....\$25,092.91
(after 30 months)

STARTER.....\$27,100.32

INSPECTOR.....\$28,104.13

REPAIRMAN.....FROM \$25,337.10
TO \$29,169.92

GENERAL MANAGER.....\$60,000.00

ONE TOP AIDE.....\$37,000.00

ELEVEN DEPARTMENT HEADS..FROM \$33,000.00
TO \$52,000.00

BENEFITS INCLUDE: pension, Social Security, health/life/accident insurance, unlimited accrued sick time, unlimited non-paid sick leave, three personal days/year, retirement after 23 years, paid training/uniforms/T passes.

The new MBTA contract includes a 20½% pay increase by March 31, 1985.

AND THE OTHER...

The major goal of the Boston School Committee in the upcoming contract negotiations with the Boston Teachers' Union will be to establish a better educational environment, with greater stability for both staff and students. The Committee's efforts will be directed toward enhancing the work place for its best teachers, while holding every teacher accountable for instructional performance which leads to improved student performance.

The present contract is an obstacle to quality education. It is also extremely expensive. Today, under Proposition 2½, Boston faces much more restrictive financial circumstances than in the past. It is for this reason that many of the financial obligations negotiated in the past must be carefully analyzed to determine whether they should be continued into the future.

A Collective Bargaining Agreement usually carries forward many items from earlier agreements. Those items may not always reflect logic or good management, but because they have been a part of the collective bargaining history, they are difficult to change. The Boston Public Schools can no longer afford (educationally or financially) to maintain restrictive and costly sections of the contract that do not maximize the use of a large portion of the system's human and/or financial resources for direct services to students.

The School Committee will strive towards a contract that will help provide a productive climate and equitable and reasonable working conditions for our teachers. It is only through mutual cooperation with the teachers and their representatives, and their understanding of our current educational and financial needs, that the School Committee can provide a sound quality education to the students of Boston.

The School Committee must recapture more flexibility in the areas of teacher hiring, firing, transferring, and bumping. The School Committee needs to look at the actual qualifications of teachers for particular positions and to actually consider these qualifications in the assignment of teachers.

The School Committee realizes the difficult job that teachers face and believes that teachers should be properly compensated. However, the present contract simply does not ensure that a very good salary and benefits package correlates with good job performance for all teachers. Presently, there are only vague standards for teacher performance in the contract. If the system is to improve the quality of education, clear expectations and accountability must be established for teachers, and provisions for such must be included within the contract.

-by Superintendent Spillane

DOLLARS AND CENTS: BPS SALARY COMPARISONS, 1982-1983

SOURCE: BTU CONTRACT & BPS

	beginning	maximum
TEACHER WITH B.A.....	\$14,733	\$24,722
CUSTODIAN.....	\$15,293	\$24,964
TEACHER WITH MASTERS..	\$15,920	\$26,245
TEACHER WITH PH.D.....	\$18,372	\$29,377
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL...	\$29,584	\$37,710
PRINCIPAL.....	\$35,767	\$39,408
SUBSTITUTE TEACHER.....	\$39.30/day	

SUPERINTENDENT.....	\$60,000
THREE DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENTS.....	\$50,000 (each)
NINE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS....	\$45,000 (each)
FIVE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS.....	NONE

NOTE: Teacher, custodian, and principal salaries do not include overtime, career awards, or extra income from coaching, special projects or extra administrative duties. The citywide average teacher's salary is \$27,315.00; averages for other categories are not available.

SENIORITY: THE TOUGHEST ISSUE

In the Boston Public Schools in the past two years, seniority has dominated the center stage as hundreds and hundreds of teachers were let go, regardless of performance, regardless of the destructive instability that ensued in the classroom. Outstanding teachers, some even publicly acknowledged as "Teacher of the Year" were laid off and their jobs filled by older teachers, many of whom had never taught a particular level or course before. Parents and the public complained at every opportunity, but were powerless to affect the outcome because the BTU contract allowed no other considerations. Seniority, argued the Union, is the only fair way to rank teachers. It is free of subjective judgements, rewards loyalty, and is easily documentable. It encourages trained teachers to help younger ones without fear of ultimately losing their jobs to them because they are younger, more energetic, and can be paid lower salaries.

Seniority currently dictates not simply who is laid off and who stays, but also who has first crack at vacant teaching slots. Furthermore, in the event of layoffs, a teacher's seniority extends to all his areas of certification, even though he may never have taught in some of them. Thus, as happened last year, English teachers who have never taught mathematics but who did have certification in mathematics displaced mathematics majors, many of whom had taught up to ten years. Roughly 400 teachers exercised this right in the last two years, and in most cases, they took over spots formerly filled by teachers teaching in their "career choice" area. In a few extreme cases, the system ended up with an Italian teacher who was not fluent in Italian and an instrumental music teacher who could only teach voice. Boston lost for good many wonderful teachers at the very same time it was holding on to some very weak ones, four of whom were ultimately fired last June, too late to do anything about retaining the four laid off in their stead.

Seniority also means there is virtually no power for the principal in the selection of teachers. He can neither invite a teacher to his school nor reject one sent to him. Frequently, the loss of a teacher in a school means a whole program is lost because it had

been developed by the excessed teacher and no one else was willing or able to take it over. There is no limit to the number of teachers a school may lose; theoretically it could be 100% and it actually has been fifty percent in some schools. Such movement disrupts the continuity of instruction and breaks up the informal interdependence among teachers that is so often present in an effective school.

With the negative effects of strict seniority so obvious, it would seem that seniority should give way during times of layoffs to a system where principals in a school accurately and evenhandedly assess teachers' relative qualifications, competence, and value to the school, and the first teacher laid off wouldn't automatically be the one with the least seniority, but rather the teacher with the least seniority who was least valuable to the education in the school.

Students of collective bargaining assert that it is not as simple as that. In a long study prepared for The American Educational Research Association, Susan Moore Johnson of the Principals' Center at Harvard University examined carefully sixty contracts from Massachusetts school districts. Among her goals was the determination of methods of reduction in force. She did, in fact, find several contracts that seemed to take into account proven performance and a school's needs as well as seniority in laying off and reassigning staff.

What she also found, however, was that even though these provisions were in the contract, they were rarely used in large systems. Knowing that they might have to prove to an arbitrator "substantial differences" in two teachers' qualifications and performance, administrators relied instead on seniority to make the decision in almost every case.

Johnson's research makes clear that although there are strong reasons for including performance evaluation in ridding clauses, the expectation cannot be that it will save "key teachers." It is a useful management tool in the rare cases when the system must choose between

SENIORITY(continued)

glittering competence and glaring incompetence, for then the competent teacher could be saved. Most often in layoff situations, though, the choice really will be between degrees of competence, which are difficult to quantify and fairly assess.

The research also shows that taking other steps becomes just as important as adding performance to ridding clauses. In Boston, defining the layoff unit, that is narrowing the certification areas, would help. If this were done, totally untried teachers in a given area would not be able to displace teachers of proven competence teaching in their chosen field.

The evaluation process for teachers

presently rests entirely with the principals and headmasters, a major stumbling point often voiced by teachers. "If a principal is not himself competent, how can he judge me?" The competence of the evaluators, therefore, must be clearly documented before a performance evaluation system can serve its true purpose, namely improving the level of performance of all employees.

The hope that glaring incompetents will be fired must rest in a expansion of the presently vague performance evaluation process and a simplification of the cumbersome dismissal procedure. Due process for the teachers is critical, but the fate of the students is just as important.

NEW DIRECTIONS(cont.)

Contract effect Central to SBM is the concept of principal as educational leader, ultimately responsible for the success or failure of his/her school. It is difficult to undertake this with so many limits on the principal's prerogatives. He or she currently has no say whatsoever about who teaches in the school. Transfers to vacancies are chosen by the teachers, and awarded strictly by seniority. Principals cannot interview prospective teachers, cannot review evaluation reports ahead of time, cannot reject teachers who choose their schools. They have little flexibility in making assignments among the staff and are also contractually limited in assigning non-academic duties such as corridor

and lunchroom duty. Finally, the present evaluation process is cumbersome and the burden of the time involved rests solely with the principal. Custodians report not to the principal but to a supervisor not located in the building.

Possible solution Include a provision in the contract that would allow principals to review relevant records and to interview teachers who choose their school. This would provide an opportunity for both principal and the teacher to discuss the educational philosophy and expectations of the school and staff.

Put the department heads in a different bargaining unit (BASAS) from the teachers so that they can participate in the evaluation of teachers.

Have the custodians and all staff report to the principal.

DOLLARS AND CENTS: BOSTON POLICE SALARIES, 1983

SOURCE: CITY HALL & BPD

	beginning	maximum
POLICE OFFICER.....	\$18,151	\$25,009
CITYWIDE AVERAGE.....	\$22,580	

POLICE COMMISSIONER.....\$59,000

TEN SUPERINTENDENTS.....\$49,000
(each)

FIFTEEN DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENTS..\$40,000
(each)

NOTE: These figures do not include incentive awards, overtime, specialists ratings, or private detail income.

Benefits include: unlimited accrued sick time, "buy back" time, i.e., the opportunity to trade 10 unused sick days/year for cash, pension, five working days for bereavement of relative.

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